

J A M E S   F R A S E R   O F   B R E A

1639 - 1699.

His Life and Writings, with special reference to  
his Theory of Universal Redemption, and its Influence  
on Religious Thought in Scotland.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE FAITH TREATISES

#### (b) THE FIRST TREATISE

(1722).

The first part of Fraser's Treatise on Faith - the First Faith Treatise - was published in 1722. The date is significant, for it was in that year that the General Assembly dealt finally, as far at least as official action was concerned, with the Marrow controversy by renewing its prohibition upon the book, refusing to repeal the 1720 Act, and rebuking the Marrow-men. In view of Fraser's well-known leaning towards Marrow teaching it is almost impossible to resist the conclusion that the First Faith Treatise was published at that time either by the Marrow-men or by some of their supporters in order to justify the position taken up by Thomas Boston and his friends. Those who were familiar with the Marrow would find many echoes of its teaching in Fraser's Treatise.

The full title of the book as published is :-

"A Treatise concerning Justifying or Saving Faith: wherein The Nature of Faith is largely handled; particularly, what respects the Acts of Faith; the Manner of Faith; the Fulness

of Faith's Assent; of the Assurance of Faith, and what Assurance is necessary; and of particular Application of the Promises; of the Object and Subject of Faith; of the Efficient Cause and End of Justifying Faith; with Answers of Objections, and practical Uses and Instructions from each point." The editor is at pains to point out that the treatise was written by Fraser "while he was Prisoner in the Bass, 1679," also that it has been "carefully revised according to the original Manuscript."

The Preface to the Reader, which is unsigned and affords no internal evidence sufficient to enable us to identify the writer, begins with the assertion that "as there is no subject that needs more to be treated of, than that of saving faith, so the way, and manner of handling it, does either very much good, or hurt; nor is there a point of religion about which divines have more differed, each speaking of the same, according to the measure of light, and uptaking which they had of the subject."

Of the many errors which surround the subject of faith it is held that one of the greatest is that of attributing too much to it, of "substituting it in the room of Christ, and making a saviour of a service." This view of faith, it is stated, though a ~~xxx~~ very gross idea and entirely subversive of the Gospel, was keenly espoused by Mr. John Goodwin, in his Imputatio Fidei, a book "which is learnedly and solidly refuted by our country-man Mr. John Brown, in

his Treatise upon Justification." Baxter and some of his followers are also charged with teaching this doctrine, and with "running back again into Egypt, and turning the covenant of grace into a covenant of works, and giving men ground for boasting, which, by the law of faith, is entirely excluded."

The writer speaks strongly of the lurking poison of this doctrine which has crept into the Church of Scotland under the specious pretext of holiness, and religious duties. He holds that the patrons of this way of thinking, in the heat of the dispute with the Antinomians, who run too much to the other extreme, have plunged themselves into the depths of legalism. And the result is that now several of the Church's best friends have had to deplore the legal principles which have crept into it. Three of these friends are mentioned, "whose names are savoury in this land, and who, in their day, were loath so much as to insinuate a reflection on any, if there were not too apparent ground."

"The first," he says, "is the blessed author of the following evangelical Treatise, who, in the Memoirs of his Life wrote by himself, hath these remarkable words : 'I saw little of the glory of Christ appear in the writings of some, and that the most part, yea of ministers, did woefully confound the two covenants, and were of an Old Testament spirit!'"

Next he refers to "that shining light, Mr. James



Webster," who in his preface to a little tractate, The Covenants of Redemption and Grace display'd, says among other things that "if a legal strain runs through our doctrine and worship, or exhortations, motives and directions to duty, it will take us from off the alone foundation, Jesus Christ, and settle us all upon ourselves, which will make another Gospel, and would bring even an angel under a dreadful curse."

His third example is "the godly and learned Mr. Thomas Halyburton," who in the Memoirs of his Life, "a book which is almost in everyone's hands," says: "I saw the evil of legal preaching, which lies in one of two things, or both; first, in laying too much stress on the works of the law, our duties and strength; or, secondly, in pressing evangelical duties, without any eye to that which is the spring of the Church's edification, the spirit of the Lord."

The writer of the Preface goes on to say that "though the real believer in Christ hath a high esteem of obedience, and will, through grace, endeavour to maintain good works, yet will he not substitute his own obedience in the room of Christ's." He regrets that men who have not distinctly learned Christ have crept into the Church and drawn many away from the simplicity of the Gospel, but he is confident that free grace will one day rise, "like a phoenix," out of the ashes of legal doctrine. He reminds the reader that Fraser was one of those who suffered for his adherence to the doctrine of free grace. After paying a warm tribute

to the testimony which Fraser bore to the character and power of faith he states that the present Treatise contains only the first part of his work, and deals only with the Nature of Faith, the rest, God willing, being afterward to follow. The two paragraphs with which the Preface ends are worth quoting in full :-

"He wrote this Treatise in the year 1679, when he was prisoner in a desolate rock in the sea, for the testimony of Jesus Christ, and as he himself tells in the postscript to the second part of this work, he had not so much as one book he could make use of, save his Bible, and little converse was allowed him with his fellow-prisoners for the same cause, through the authority of his keepers: hence it is easy to conclude, how much of the Lord's presence and assistance has been with him, which will be discernable to any intelligent reader: in this place I say, he wrote the following Treatise, where he lived above sense, and feeling, on the free and gratuitous promise of God in Christ, where he had nothing to look to from sensible things, yet his actings of faith were strong and vigorous, and ~~that~~ the sharper his afflictions were, the stronger was his faith; for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

"The reader may be pleased to know that the following Treatise is both genuine, and faithfully printed according to the original. I did not think there would have been need to have mentioned this; but that some ignorant people have

been prepossessed with such prejudices, without the least shadow of ground: and if any doubt of it, they may have access to see the original Manuscript, which can be attested to be his, and that there is neither the addition, nor diminution of a sentence; only, as was said before, the rest, viz., On the Grounds of Faith, is afterwards to follow. May the same spirit of grace, that assisted the worthy author in writing it, bless it to every reader of it."

The Treatise, which extends to some 280 pages (12<sup>o</sup>), is in six chapters. In the Introduction Fraser asserts that "nothing is more frequently in the mouths of men than faith; and yet nothing is less known in a right manner, and saving way, and nothing more mistaken and misrepresented by weak and unsanctified heads." "He who errs in faith," he continues, "and in the article of the covenant of grace, cannot be accounted sound in other points (such influence it hath on the whole of religion); so, I can hardly think him heterodox, or dangerously so, who is sound in this article."

He agrees with those who hold that it is better to live by faith than to be able to give an accurate definition of it, yet he believes that faith is a matter of such importance that it is most desirable to have clear conceptions of it. It is a thing of such mystery that even those who have the root of the matter in them acknowledge that there are "some knots they cannot get loosed, some paths unseen by the

vulture's eye." And even many "approven builders," who have built gold, silver and precious stones upon the blessed foundation Jesus Christ, have yet in this matter of faith built "some of their hay and stubble, which the day of the increasing light of the Gospel, and fire hath tried, discovered, and burnt up, and yet will more and more."

He refers to five of the reasons which led him to write the Treatise. 1. He discovered the sweetness and advantage which come to those who humbly search into the mystery of faith. 2. In his meditation upon the subject he found light upon many difficulties which at one time straitened his conscience, and now he desires to pass on to others what has been of use to himself. 3. The doleful mistakes and dangerous errors of some in this matter at the present time have constrained him to give his testimony against these, and for the faith once delivered to the saints. 4. The difficulties of the subject, and the logical intricacies and subtilties with which certain persons have still further jumbled and obscured it have been a grave hindrance to many, and for the sake of such it is worth while making the attempt to clear up these difficulties, "and to present our present doctrine as more agreeing with our first Reformers, than some, who swerving therefrom will allow." 5. Finally, he says, "I was invited, yea, necessarily compelled to this, by an afflicting Providence, of which I shall not speak particularly, because of my respect and tenderness to persons therein

concerned, insomuch that it seemed necessary to give the world an account of what I hold therein."

Now comes a paragraph which must be quoted in full. "I know and acknowledge," Fraser writes, "that in some things I seem to step out of the common road wherein the modern Divines of our Church, in Britain and Ireland, have walked; especially as to what relates to particular application of the promises, unregenerate persons having right to them, ere they close with Christ by faith, and the extent of Christ's death. But however I express myself diversely from some, whose persons I much love and respect; yet I trust it shall be found I maintain no singular opinions: but what, however gainsayed by some, yet strenuously maintained by others reputed learned, pious and orthodox; and that it shall be found, that we differ more in appearance, than reality, and in expression, than the thing itself; and each man chooses his own words, which being different, may occasion some to imagine a real difference; what I have written I believe; I desire not to kindle a flame, or minister any occasion of further division, nor to fill folk's heads with fancies; I profess my aim to have been the information of God's truth, and the spiritual advantage of others, and to level at the same mark with those godly Divines with whom I seem most to differ. Though I do not always use the same means for compassing the same end; I am sensible of my many infirmities which adhere to me and my best works; and for all which, and



for what may have escaped me in this little tractate, I have heartily desired pardon of the Lord through Christ's blood, and a blessing thereon, and acceptanc<sup>e</sup> thereof, in as far as agreeable to His will. To whom be praise for ever. Amen."

"I have divided this tractate in two parts, " he ends by saying; "in the first part I treat of the Nature of Faith where I handle the act, the object, the manner or form, the subject, efficient cause, and end of faith. In the second part, I handle the Grounds of Faith, whereunto I have subjoined an appendix, concerning the objective extent of Christ's death. And finally, have endeavoured to illustrate the Nature of Faith with several Scripture metaphors and notions, y<sup>e</sup>under which it is holden out to us."

The first chapter is entitled Of the Act of Justifying Faith. Faith in general is defined as "an assent unto a testimony, or an assent unto any truth upon the authority of the testifier." Justifying faith must therefore include essent, and this is what Fraser calls the "act of faith." This act, he says, goes by several names in Scripture, e.g. "believing on, coming to, or receiving of Christ," "laying hold on the covenant," "eating and drinking the flesh and blood of the Son of God," and sometimes even "repentance."

(1) Certain rules have to be observed, he insists, if justifying faith is to be rightly understood. a. Our ideas about it must conform to the notions and expressions used



in Scripture. B. Faith being an echo or answer to God's call in the Gospel it follows that "what God declares in the Gospel, that faith must assent and say Amen to; what it speaks to the soul itself, it must believe; what the Gospel commands, the soul must obey." C. Faith being not merely a condition but an instrument of justification, we must "so conceive of it as to make it something in its own nature apt to justify;" it is the means by which we make our own the blessings of the new covenant. d. We must always keep in mind what God intended in making faith the instrument of justification; His intention was that His own rich bounty and grace should be exalted, and that boasting on our part should be excluded.

(2) One must be clear/er to what justifying faith is not.

a. Faith is not an act of knowledge; though there is some knowledge in faith, for in some measure we understand and apprehend what we believe, yet "the assent of knowledge is founded on the evidence of the things themselves which are known," while "faith is founded on the authority of the testimony." b. Faith is not an act of the will, for no act of the will can be expressed as "believing." Faith lies in the understanding, not in the will. c. Faith is not a general assent to the truths of Scripture, "for else devils, who believe and tremble, should have faith." d. Faith is not, as Arminians contend, the mere believing of the proposition that Christ died for all. e. Faith is not any of the affections - hope, desire, love, and the like - for

none of these can~~y~~ be called "believing." f. Faith is not a mere assent to the general promises of the Gospel. g. Nor is it an assent to the truths of the Gospel together with an "estimation" of them, and a sincere purpose of Gospel obedience; "for let men say and pretend what they will, here is nothing but a new covenant of works on some milder terms, and accommodated some way to our weakness .... Whatever establisheth salvation upon anything we do unto the Lord, or wherein we may glory, must be renounced here." h. Faith is not a mere groundless imagination which says confidently "the Lord is ours;" opinion, fancy, or imagination is no sure foundation for true saving faith. i. Nor is faith a mere willingness to receive Christ; hunger or the desire to eat is not the same as the act of eating, so no more is a mere willingness to believe, faith in the proper sense; there must be a taking, and a receiving.

(3) What then is faith, and in what positive acts does it consist ? Fraser begins by quoting the Larger Catechism where faith is defined as receiving of Christ, and also by referring to Thomas Shepard who in his Sound Believer speaks of faith as the soul's coming to Christ. Both expressions, he maintains, are Scriptural, and are really different ways of saying one and the same thing.

But what does this coming to Christ, or this receiving of Him mean ? In what acts of the soul does it consist ? a. Faith in its beginnings, he replies, consists in the

"hope of salvation from Christ's sufficiency, His power, gracious nature, and blessed offices; desire of, from sense of necessity; and love to, from the excellency of those things holden out in the Gospel." b. In its next stage it is waiting upon God in Christ for pardon of sins, and those other benefits which the soul needs. c. In its final stage it is the actual receiving of the faithful saying, "Christ came to save sinners," by the particular application of the promise. d. The fruit of faith is resting on or in Christ. It is living a life of dependence upon Him. e. The chief physical act of faith is assent, but an assent which differs from that which devils and reprobates may have both in the manner of it and in its object.

The second chapter is concerned with the Manner, or Form of Faith. Justifying or saving faith, according to Fraser, differs from faith in general in the form and manner of the assent which is of the essence of all real faith.

(1) To begin with, justifying faith is cordial. a. This is borne out by Scripture, e.g. "With the heart man believes unto righteousness" .... "They gladly received the Word" .... "They shall be a willing people in the day of Thy power." b. God desires the heart above everything else; all service not rendered with the heart is unacceptable to Him. c. Unless it come from the heart faith is fruitless and dead. d. Faith which springs from a living Word will be a living faith. e. The privileges of the new covenant are so displayed by

the Spirit of God that the heart cannot but be touched and moved. f. The Gospel and its promises are so particularised and individualised that the heart is inevitably affected. g. The Gospel is shown to be based upon sure foundations - this also touches the heart. h. The Gospel is proclaimed to those who have real need of it and such people being conscious of their need will receive it gladly.

But, some one may object, if love is held to be essential to justifying faith is this not equivalent to saying that we are back again to the old covenant of works ? No,, replies Fraser, for it is the faith which justifies, not the love which accompanies it. "Heat is inseparably annexed to the sun that enlightens us; but it is not the heat of the sun that enlightens: faith embraces the promises with love, yet it is not love that justifies, or embraces, or so unites us to Christ, as to interest us in Him."

Justifying faith, as well as being cordial, is practical. It inspires to action. All dead faith is rejected; what is demanded is a living faith, a faith which will purify the heart and satisfy and feed the soul.

It may be asked, How may we be sure that we cordially believe the Gospel ? a. We shall with our whole soul turn from our sins. b. We shall find that both our judgment and our affections, our conscience and our lusts, our mind and our heart, will lead <sup>in</sup> ~~is~~ the same direction. c. We shall willingly submit to Christ's commands, to His cross, to His

reproaches, to His chastisements, to His trials. d. We shall find that He alone is able to satisfy us. e. We shall not only believe the Good News about Him, but receive it gladly. f. Repentance will be mingled with our faith. g. We shall be quickened and strengthened for all the duties connected with our sanctification. h. We shall feel that we cannot live without Christ.

Let us labour to get this love of the truth, and to taste the exceeding sweetness of the Gospel, for none are saved who do not heartily assent to it; this glad acceptance is a necessary constituent of justifying faith.

(2) Fraser now turns to deal with the complete assent and assurance which he holds to be part of justifying faith. Even in the weakest faith there is some assurance, he says, while faith to be saving must have an assent that is full, strong and firm.

a. This assent may be to the principles set down in the Gospel, such as that Christ came into the world, that He died, and that He satisfied divine justice for our sins; that life and remission of sins are offered through His blood; that if we believe we shall be saved; and that Christ is an all-sufficient saviour, and so on. Or it may be directed to the thought of our own salvation, which is the material object of our faith; we not only believe the general doctrine of the Gospel, but we also look to it for our salvation. As there is this double object of faith, so there is a twofold



assurance, one of faith and the other of knowledge, both of them having as their object our salvation. Neither of these kinds of assurance is perfect in this life.

b. Whatever faith assents to it must assent to fully if it is to justify, for without full assent faith is nothing more than mere opinion. The Christian has sufficient grounds for full assent for the foundations upon which his faith is built are certain and infallible. Let us remember also that Christ has commanded us to draw near with confidence. If we lack this confidence our faith will not last, and we shall not be able to love Christ or to rejoice in Him.

c. In what sense can we speak of justifying faith as sure and certain? It is sure and certain because it is founded upon sure grounds, it is rooted and firmly implanted in the heart, and it shows itself sufficient to do the work for which it was intended.

d. What measure of assurance do we require to make our faith justifying? We must believe that it can save the soul from sin; unless we can believe this, which is the true object of our faith, then our assurance is insufficient. Further, our assurance must be such that we are led to do the works of righteousness; it must be strong enough to separate us from profane courses. Again, it must be an abiding and growing thing so that neither length of time nor strength of time shall be able to wear it away. And it must be able to stand in the day of temptation. "If when a ship is tossed



with winds, if she but drop an anchor she is sure; winds may blow, and waves may swell and assault the ship, yet she is sure, she is not driven, the anchor keeps the grip; so the true believers may be sore assaulted with divers temptations, yet their anchor cast within the veil holds the grip, and they ride out the storm."

(3) This conception of faith will give rise to certain questions. To begin with, does the assurance that we shall be saved come before or after faith? The persuasion and the faith, Fraser replies, are wrapped up together; they are simultaneous. "The persuasion of salvation, through and only from the merits of Christ, is faith, before which faith, I confess, there is no persuasion: for faith cannot be before itself." Any ambiguity here comes from the confounding of the assurance which is faith with the assurance which comes from evidence.

But is it not the case that assurance is the fruit of faith, and not faith itself? There is an assurance of faith, Fraser repeats, which is of the very nature of faith itself, and not a fruit of it.

Are there not many saints, now as well as in past generations, who have doubts about their ultimate salvation? Faith does not necessarily require a measure of assurance which excludes all doubting, for everything in this world is imperfect. While faith in the abstract leaves no room for doubt, in practice it is often accompanied by doubts and fears.

If we insist upon absolute assurance do we not "cut the throat" of many a sincere soul's consolation, and are we not in danger of driving such a person to despair? No, says Fraser, for as has just been pointed out, there may be true faith even where there are doubts. At the same time he is convinced that much harm has been done by belittling the truth that assurance is of the essence of faith; as a result of that belittling, "there are more doubtings and strugglings, and fewer assured Christians, than when faith was defined by assurance."

"A man may believe," some one may say, "though he knows not that he believes; but he can have no assurance, till he knows that he believes; therefore faith does not consist in assurance." While it is true, it is replied, that a man cannot have assurance until he knows that he believes, yet wherever there is a direct conscious act of faith there will be assurance. There are times however when both the faith and the assurance are so weak that their "pulse cannot be felt."

If we hold that God's Word gives us ground for assurance is not that likely to lead to presumption? There is ground for assurance, and that without presumption, in God's Word; every sinner who hears the Gospel is called to believe, and to believe with confidence: there is no presumption in that.

(4) How are the promises to be particularly applied?

It is Fraser's contention that faith consists not only in

assenting to the general truths of the Gospel, such as that Christ died for sinners, but also in applying them particularly to oneself. "In all faith there is a particular application to the individual .... of a general truth .... whether it be mercy or judgment .... By a dogmatical faith, we believe the truths in general, but by a true justifying faith we apply these truths particularly to ourselves." We apply the general truths by taking them and making them personal; we no longer say simply "Christ died for sinners;" we now say, "Christ died for us." We believe that God has given eternal life to men, but we also believe that He has given it to us in particular.

(5) A fuller enquiry into the nature of faith's particular application of the promises follows. Fraser is of opinion that it is this question which has raised some of the most acute controversies not only between Papists and Protestants, but also among Protestants themselves. In what sense are the promises to be particularly applied ?

It is generally agreed, he holds, that Christ, held forth in the Gospels as crucified, is the principal, formal object of faith. It is also generally agreed that faith comes to Christ for salvation; that the sinner believes in his own salvation as at least a possible thing; that God by the promises of the Gospel can persuade us of His love and give us a satisfying vision of Christ; that we must believe in the sufficiency of Christ to save the individual; that there

may be this particular application where there is no strong persuasion, where indeed there is doubt and a very weak and inform assent; that whatever subjective uncertainty there may be the objective grounds of faith are very sure; that assurance may differ in degree in different persons, indeed in the same person at different times; and finally, that however much true faith may be assaulted, weakened, darkened, and interrupted by temptations to unbelief yet it is never totally overcome or extinguished, and in the end it gains the victory.

With these generally accepted beliefs in mind Fraser sets down his own convictions with regard to the particular application of the promises. First of all, what is it that faith particularly applies in justification? Faith applies to itself the particular promise, "If I believe I shall be saved." It beholds Christ and all the privileges of the new covenant as its own, and it really and firmly believes its own salvation.

How does the soul particularly apply the promises? It does so by looking steadily to Christ; by cordially embracing the promises; by deliberately choosing Christ; by coming to Him with the intention of being saved; by expecting salvation through Him; by craving absolution through His merits; and finally, by hope and expectation.

What reasons can be given for this particular application of the promises? There are some who hold that

to accept the promises generally without making any particular application of them is sufficient for salvation; but according to Fraser a general assent is not sufficient: particular application is essential. a. It is, he points out, the plain testimony of Scripture that our personal salvation is the proper object of our faith; "this is then the record, that by faith we are to believe, not that God hath given eternal life to some, or that there is eternal life to be had; but that God hath given us eternal life; so that eternal life to us particularly is the object of our faith." b. In the offer of the Gospel salvation is held forth particularly to everyone in the visible Church; "now, if salvation be offered particularly to every man, then certainly faith, which is but the echo and answer of the soul to the call of God in the Gospel, must believe, apprehend, and lay hold on salvation particularly, else it were not the answer to the call." c. Faith lays hold on what the soul would most gladly have, what it particularly wants, and what it stands most in need of; and without doubt what a man needs most and desires most is his own particular salvation. d. A sinner cannot be justified particularly unless faith has particularly applied the promises. e. The Law condemns us particularly, and says to each of us as individuals, "Thou hast sinned;" in the same manner the Gospel comes to us as individuals, saying to each, "Christ died for thee." f. A general assent to the promises is but a confused faith,



and what is required of us is a certain and distinct faith.

g. If we do not accept this thought of the particular application of the promises then in a sense we obscure the grace of God. h. Without this particular application there can be no comfort, joy or security of soul. i. Can we really close with Christ or the promises without making this particular application ?

But, it will be objected, not all men are to be saved; is it right then to ask all to believe the promises particularly ? Is this not asking them to believe a lie ? Fraser does not believe that God asks any man to believe a lie, though he says that certain divines have asserted that He does. God could, he says, in virtue of His sovereignty, make it a man's duty to believe that which is never to come to pass; but he is convinced that He does not exercise His sovereignty in that way. He is further convinced that "if any shall, in God's method and manner, that is first convinced of sin and misery, and utter undoneness in himself, cordially and fully, renouncing all other defences and hopes whosoever, believe and expect salvation through the name of Christ, only upon God's call and warrant so to do, he, in that case, believes no lie, but a truth which shall be particularly accomplished in him." We are not asked to believe that every one shall be saved, for that is an untruth, but we are asked to accept the fact that every one who believes shall be saved. "Nothing can or will hinder



salvation but unbelief, and when a man believes, that bar is removed, and taken out of the way."

But surely the object of faith must be before the act of faith? If I am asked to believe that I shall be saved the certainty of my salvation must be anterior to my act of faith. Fraser meets this objection by distinguishing between two objects of faith, what he calls "the objectum motivum, the motiving, formal object of faith," and "the objectum terminativum materiale, which does not move or motive the understanding to assent, but whereinto the assent is terminated, and which it believes." The first is anterior to faith, and from it faith springs, while our salvation on the other hand is not anterior to our believing but follows upon it. "It is only an object to which our faith is terminated, and not an object which motives our faith .... The object before faith is conditional. but faith closing with the object, the object becomes absolute. The first bar to our salvation was removed by Christ's coming into the world to save sinners, but before salvation can become absolute there is a second bar to be removed, and that is accomplished only by our faith and our individual appropriation of the promises, without which we cannot be saved.

Is there any evidence in Scripture that our sins, or my sins, will be pardoned? It is not expressly stated in Scripture that any particular man's sins are to be pardoned, yet there is enough revealed to warrant us in

believing that our sins will be pardoned, and each man can apply that to himself personally.

This doctrine of the particular application of the promises, Fraser believes, give us grounds for confidence and rejoicing. We do not need to have our names expressly mentioned in Scripture; we have sufficient grounds without that for appropriating the promises. What is required is that our wills should be moved and stirred up to accept the Gospel offer, and we must strive to give not only a general assent to the promises, but to take them to ourselves as individuals.

The chapter closes with an illustration of which Fraser makes frequent use. "If a man find a bond made to a blank person, if he fills up his name therein, the disponent is as certainly engaged as if the creditor's name were filled up at first, and the bond made to him: the promises are an indefinite obligation to blank persons, no man's particular name is insert therein, faith inserts and fills up the believer's name therein: and hence the promise is now to it."

Having in his first chapter dealt with the act of faith, and in the second with the manner by which it acts, Fraser comes in the third to consider the object of saving faith, "which head," he says, "though very necessary and slightly noticed by many, is yet very difficult; and to those who have waded deepliest in these waters, hath occasioned various and diverse thoughts."

Some people, says Fraser, hold that Christ is the proper object of justifying faith, others say the promises; but such people, according to Fraser, really hold the same thing for the object of faith may rightly be regarded either as Christ or as the promises. Before however the matter can be made quite clear there are two or three considerations which must be borne in mind. To begin with, faith may mean nothing more than belief in what is found in Scripture, or it may mean that particular act of the soul by which a man is justified. Further, it may be regarded as primarily an act of the will, or as act of the understanding. It has also to be remembered that there is an immediate object of faith, and a mediate or ultimate object; just as when we look into a mirror the glass itself is the immediate object of sight, while the image in it is the mediate or ultimate object. Finally, faith believes some things expressly, others implicitly; the latter being "swallowed down in the lump, in a more general and confused way."

The proper object of faith may be discovered, says Fraser, by considering first of all what faith is not. It is not, for example, the mere acceptance of all the truths contained in Scripture though we are, of course, expected to give assent to whatever God says in His Word. It is not mere assent to the proposition that Christ<sup>diad</sup> for all, for Papists, Arminians, Lutherans, and many "profane, ignorant and godless wretches" believe that, and not all of these are

to be saved. It is not Jesus Christ considered apart from any promise or word concerning Him; faith is an assent, and an assent presupposes a testimony. It is not assent to a conditional promise, such as "If thou believest thou shalt be saved;" many believe that in a general way but do not accept it for themselves or make it personal.

Again, faith is not mere assent to any Gospel proposition such as that Christ came into the world, that He is the Son of God, that He died and rose again, and that He is able to save sinners; these statements are all true and must be believed, but merely to believe them is not equivalent to having justifying faith. It is not mere assent to the proposition which affirms the all-sufficiency, power, goodness and truth of God; we must believe that proposition, but we need something more.

Further, faith is not the acceptance of the objective testimony of the Spirit by means of immediate, intellectual revelations, or by extraordinary dreams and visions, to the fact that we are elect, or justified, or that our sins are, or shall be pardoned. Nor is it the acceptance of the testimony of poor, weak and sinful men. Nor, finally, is it the acceptance of the "absolute promises of Christ without His benefits, nor the promises of His benefits without Christ Himself; nor of sanctification without salvation and justification; nor of justification without sanctification.

What then is faith, and what is its proper object ?

The object of faith in general, according to Fraser, is both Law and Gospel, and all the truths contained in Scripture. The immediate formal object of faith is the promises of salvation and life through Christ which we find in the Gospel, and our first duty is to accept and close with these promises. In Scripture these are held forth as the object to which faith is terminated. In a sense Christ Himself, Christ in His own person, is the object of faith; considered as the means by which salvation is made ours He is its formal object; while considered as the end of faith, that in which faith terminates, He is its material object. More particularly Christ as crucified, and crucified for our sins, as the means of justification, is the formal object of faith, that on which faith believes. Through His power, sufficiency and merit He is the ordinance and way to eternal life; salvation is through His blood.

But it must be noted that we must see Him dying for us in particular, not just for sinners in general, for only so is He really the proper object of faith. "'Tis not enough thou see Him dying for sinners in general, but thou must see Him dying for thy sins, else thou wilt not, canst not close with Him as a crucified saviour. It is not enough to say, "It may be Christ will save me, and for ought I know I may be one of those for whom He died." No one who can say no more than that will be able to come boldly to the throne of grace as all are commanded to do. "The material object of faith,"



Fraser repeats, "and that which faith believes, is not salvation in general, but our salvation is particular."

More fully expressed, "the promises of the Gospel, or covenant of grace, promising Christ with all His benefits to sinners in order to salvation, or the promise of salvation, or eternal life through Jesus Christ crucified, absolutely, is the formal and material, adequate and complete object of faith." Put in other words, Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life is both the formal and the material object of faith.

Some may object that to believe in our own particular salvation cannot be the formal <sup>or</sup> ~~of~~ material object of faith, because nowhere in Scripture is it revealed, either directly or indirectly, that this or that particular man shall be saved. To which the answer is that there is indeed a conditional revelation of this very nature, for it is expressly said that if you or I or any other person believe, we shall be saved. This, it is true, is a conditional revelation, but it is also a particular revelation in that it refers not to mankind<sup>d</sup> in general but to individuals. If we are asked what warrant or ground we have for applying a conditional promise to ourselves and making it absolute Fraser's answer is that "the very applicatory believing of it, being the condition of performance, the command of God, and my necessities, and the indefinite enunciation and revelation of the promises to me, and my right to them, conveyed by the Word and Sacraments, are sufficient ground



for me to apply the promises to myself particularly." "By faith," he continues, "we insert our names in these indefinite, virtual promises, and so make them speak determinately to us, and they become ours formally and actually, in which before we were only indeterminately and virtually concerned."

This view of the object of justifying faith is, in Fraser's opinion, of cardinal importance. He points out that even among professing Christians there is much unsound faith, and there are many who fail to close with the right object. There are some who hope confidently for salvation, and yet are unable to point to any promise or word upon which their hope is based; what faith they have is grounded upon mere fancy. There are some whose faith is based not upon God's will as revealed in Scripture but upon some internal manifestation or so-called testimony of the Spirit. There are some who close with the promises of grace and pardon, but not with those of purity and power and holiness; they "have peace, and are freed from horror, but they receive no virtue from Christ to heal their heart-diseases; they find not the power of Christ's death and resurrection, making them die to sin, and live in newness of life." There are some who come to and close with a Christ who is no more than an idol of their own fancy. There are some who close with Christ, not for what He is in Himself, but merely in order that they may be rid of sin, and not of all sins, but only of those which straiten and pain their consciences most. There are some who close

with Christ for life, pardon and holiness, but not with Him only, for they make their good works a part of their justification; this Fraser regards as tending "to the introduction of heathenish morality, and the old covenant, and inconsistent with salvation." And finally, there are some who close only with the general truths of Scripture.

A right view of the object of justifying faith, says Fraser, furnishes matter of consolation to all poor sinners who hear the sound of the Gospel. All they need, all that is necessary to make them happy, is held out to them in the Gospel, and held out freely, without money and without price. They are told not merely to hope, or desire, or believe in the possibility of salvation; they are commanded to believe the certainty of it. The ground of their salvation is wholly in Christ, and not in any degree whatsoever in themselves. "I confess," says Fraser, "were our hopes of confidence bottomed any way upon any work in us, it were no wonder our faith should stagger, according to the foundation it were built upon: but now, all the grounds of our hope and confidence being in God's promise, the more confident and assured you be, the more you glorify God, and the greater respect you put on the grace of God."

In his fourth chapter Fraser passes to consideration of the subject of faith. He holds that it is generally agreed that the remote subject of faith is the soul of man, but he believes that it is possible to particularise a little more.

The whole soul, and the whole man, may indeed be regarded as the subject of faith, and as involved in the act of believing. Heart as well as head is involved here, for "with the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." While there can be no faith apart from the understanding, the heart with the will and the affections is also concerned, for while assent may come from the understanding cordial assent, which is of the essence of all true faith, requires the heart. The will is concerned in the act of believing in that it moves and incites the understanding to consider and meditate upon the Gospel; in that it assists the understanding to believe - "as the sharpness or acuity of the knife doth to its better cutting of any material; the sharper the knife be, the easier and better will it cut;" and in that the fruit and operation of faith lies mainly in the will and the affections. Again, what chooses, embraces, loves, and cleaves to the Gospel is not the understanding but the will.

But while granting all this Fraser maintains that the primary subject of faith is the understanding. Faith is principally assent, he holds, and assent is a function not of the will but of the understanding; cordial assent certainly is necessary, but the "cordialness" is not the primary thing. Further, if the unity of faith is to be conserved it can hardly be regarded as seated in two distinct faculties at one and the same time, otherwise it ceases to be one grace, and

becomes two. Again, if faith be regarded as a function either in whole or in part of the will it is no longer faith in the true sense but mere desire or willingness to have something; true faith is "the taking and receiving the waters of life, not our willingness to receive them, which is but a disposition of the soul by which it is made fit to believe."

Looking at the matter from another point of view, the promises of the Gospel, as has been pointed out in the previous chapter, are the true object of faith, and therefore the understanding, which is the faculty which closes with the promises, must be faith's true subject. It has to be remembered too that the opposite of faith - doubting or unbelief - lies in the understanding, so faith also must have its seat there. Again, faith is essentially the believing of God's record concerning His Son, and this act of believing is undoubtedly a function of the understanding. Finally, once we move into the region of the will we touch dangerous ground for we are in effect returning to the covenant of works, "for all acts of the will look something like doing, and give something as it were;" while the understanding "is passive, and made to elicit its acts from the evidence of the object, and so furnishes less grounds for boasting, and more formally gives glory to God."

Is it not the case, some one may ask, that the text just quoted - "with the heart man believes unto righteousness" - implies that the will and the affections which are seated in

the heart are the proper subject of faith ? The heart here, Fraser replies, really means the understanding. Even if it is to be taken as what we usually mean by the heart, i.e. the seat of the will and the affections, all that can logically be deduced from the text is that the will is concerned in the act of believing, and this Fraser does not deny.

Are the will <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ the understanding really two distinct faculties ? According to the most judicious philosophers, says Fraser, they are, but even supposing they are more properly to be regarded as two sides of the same thing, still faith springs from the side of the understanding, and not from that of the will.

It is not with propositions but with Christ that we close in faith, and surely it is the will which chooses and embraces Him ? Fraser agrees that it is with Christ that we close, but with Christ held forth by way of a word, promise, or proposition, and therefore it is the understanding which is primarily concerned.

But surely the will must in some sense be the subject of faith, for the whole soul, not the understanding alone, must close with Christ ? This Fraser grants, but holds that what really happens is that faith, seated in the understanding, stirs up the will and the whole soul with it to embrace Christ. *Does this contradict p. 364, line 9-12 ?*

Is not unbelief properly to be attributed not to the understanding but to the will ? Both belief and unbelief,



Fraser holds, come in part from the will, but when traced back to their real source they are found to spring from the understanding.

Is not faith properly to be regarded as a rolling of ourselves on, a coming to, and a receiving of Christ, all of which acts are surely acts of the will ? The acquiescence of the soul, it is answered, including the heart with the will and the affections is included in the act of faith, but properly speaking it is an effect of faith which is itself aroused at the outset by God's word to which it is a response.

To sum up this section Fraser points out that the ultimate subject of faith is the soul itself, though the primary subject, as he has pointed out, is the understanding. "The moral subject capable of believing is, in a word, the humble soul broken from the world, from sin and self-righteousness." Only such a humble and broken soul can really believe. "Therefore doth the Lord by contrition, conviction, and humiliation, take away this resistance, by showing sin, and the evil thereof, and of the world, so as the soul is made to groan, as the Israelites under their bondage, and, by the discovery of its undoneness, the soul is made to welcome a saviour, and to come gladly to Him, that it may have life."

Now follows "a more particular enquiry into the nature, measure, necessity, and influence of preparations by the law in order to our union with Christ." Fraser begins by

saying that though man has fallen into a bottomless gulf of sin and misery he is not yet in a desperate condition for God has appointed a remedy. This remedy we find in Christ through whom we have life. But there are certain impediments, our sinfulness in particular, which render us incapable of coming of ourselves to Christ. We must therefore be made or compelled to come; regeneration in other words is a work of creation. Among the impediments which keep us from Christ are our ignorance of our true condition; our hard-heartedness and insensibility to our misery; our love of the world, which takes the place which Christ ought to have; the confidence which we place in the performance of duties; the proud quarrelling spirit which we exhibit in our dealings with the Lord; and finally, our aversion to Christ.

A work of conversion is necessary, and this God carries out in us, though not in precisely the same manner in every case for He "is a free agent, and hath not bounded Himself, but worketh when and how He will, and by a manifold variety in everything, displayeth His own infinite and marvellous wisdom." In the case of the elect God by the work of His Spirit fits such for special grace; it seems clear however, Fraser maintains, that they must have something in themselves that is special, something which renders them fit to receive what God bestows upon them. It is also clear, he holds, that some real humiliation and preparation of the soul for Christ may be found together with much blindness and hardness

of heart.

All the Spirit's work within us, Fraser proceeds, is directed to the work of getting us to believe; it is a preparation for faith. Merely to be burdened with a sense of sin does not guarantee that we are to be the best Christians; a full revelation of the Gospel, for example, is also required. Ordinarily God works in the way here described in disposing men to receive His gifts, but He has many other ways of instilling grace in them. The important point is that God by His Spirit and in His own perfect way imparts to men a sense of sin, destroys their self-righteousness, breaks down their pride, and convinces them of their vileness, and the utter inadequacy of any work of theirs to win salvation for them. All these preparatory workings and dispositions of the soul by God's Spirit are anterior to faith.

At this point in the chapter Fraser interpolates a vindication of Thomas Shepard - Fraser always spells the name "Shepherd" - whose doctrine of humiliation had apparently been adversely criticised by Giles Firmin in a book called The Real Christian. As he writes Fraser says that he has a larger review of the whole book beside him so presumably what he incorporates in this chapter is an abbreviated version of a longer criticism. (This longer criticism still exists in ms. form - see Bibliography at end of this thesis).

Fraser begins by pointing out that he is not in the habit of wasting time on what men like Firmin write, for "what

profane ruffians in their pamphlets bark is not to be noticed." In this case he makes an exception, for Firmin's book contains some good things worthy of notice though his criticism of Shepard is unjust.

Fraser's defence of the New England saint is prompted by "respect both to the truth, and to the precious memory of that interpreter, one of a thousand, and to discharge some part of the obligation put upon me by that worthy man, whose labours have been beyond the labours of all, in a special manner, blessed of God to me, although no otherwise acquainted with him."

Firmin found fault with what Shepard said concerning the preparations, including humiliation, which are required before the soul can come to Christ. In opposition to Shepard he held that we ought rather to remove stumbling-blocks out of the sinner's way when he is flying for refuge to Christ, than, as he maintained Shepard did with his doctrine of humiliation, to put barriers in the way. Fraser's answer to this is that what Shepard actually did was to try to remove the great stumbling-blocks already in the sinner's way - ignorance, security, worldliness, self-righteousness, pride, unbelief.

Firmin held that all who hear the Gospel are called to believe, whether they are prepared or not, and that to insist on preparatory work, fears, terrors, humiliations, and downcastings - as he said Shepard did - is unwarrantable and

needless. Fraser replies that what Shepard, and all other orthodox divines maintain is not that such preparations confer any right to the promises but that without them the soul will not believe; "they are necessary not to make it our duty to believe, but to cause us to believe."

Firmin maintain<sup>ed</sup> that many gracious persons are not conscious of any such preparatory work in their own case. That proves, says Fraser, not that there never is any such preparatory work, but that the soul is not always conscious of it.

Many are drawn, said Firmin, by the love of Christ and the sweetness of the Gospel, and not ~~all~~ at all by the rugged gate of these preparatory works. All are so drawn who are effectually drawn, says Fraser agreeing so far with Firmin; but he continues, "unless there were conviction of sin and misery by the Law, neither Christ or His Gospel could be sweet to a sinner."

God's ways of drawing a sinner, according to Firmin, are very secret and various. Granted, replies Fraser, "yet as to the substantial work of preparation for Christ, consisting in conviction of sin, and humiliation under it, seeing this is the way set down in Scripture, we may affirm, that God will walk in His own road."

It is tyranny, said Firmin, to make the method and way in which God has dealt with us a standard for others, and yet there are many who do so. Fraser knows of no able divine,



certainly not Shepard, who makes any such demand.

May it not be, Firmin asked, that souls under what is called a preparatory work have with the very first stroke of it an immediate seed of grace conveyed to them? Many people, says Fraser, never get beyond the preparatory work, and unless a man reaches the stage at which he expresses faith in Christ he cannot be regarded as a believer.

We are not told, according to Firmin, that Lydia, Zacchaeus, or the Samaritans had any such preparatory work wrought in them, and yet they believed. As Shepard pointed out, Fraser replies, it is never safe to argue from silence; and to affirm that these persons had no conviction and no sense of need, merely because Scripture does not refer to such preparatory work in them, is unwarrantable.

Many infants, deaf persons, and idiots are saved, said Firmin, and none of these are capable of these preparatory dispositions. To argue from God's extraordinary way of working to His ordinary way is not safe, says Fraser; in the case of the classes mentioned God undoubtedly employs methods which He does not ordinarily use.

Apparently the foregoing objections were the chief of those which Firmin raised against Shepard's teaching in general. Fraser now proceeds to deal with his criticisms of Shepard's doctrine of humiliation in particular. Firmin maintained that to insist upon a large measure of humiliation, even to the extent of being willing to be damned, before

a man can be thought fit to come to Christ is equivalent to saying that he must be as good before he is converted as after, as holy before he is united to Christ as after. Fraser's reply is that however humbled a man may be before his conversion anything he does then is not to be compared with what he does after conversion. "These actions before faith, not proceeding from a principle of life, but merely from the external operation of the Spirit on a man, are not to be compared to actions which flow from the Spirit of Christ united with a man, so as to be a principle of life in him, and of spiritual gracious actions .... The meanest action proceeding from faith is preferable to the most glorious actions of hypocrites, and such as want faith .... The meanest service of the believer, a cup of water given to a disciple, if offered on the right altar, is more excellent than the most glorious performances, though it were the giving of the body to be burned, which do not proceed from a principle of faith." The value of an action, Fraser insists, depends upon the principle from which it springs.

Neither Christ nor His apostles, said Firmin, ever demanded a large measure of humiliation of any would-be disciple; all they required of such was that he should be weary and heavy-laden. Fraser replies that Christ did demand more of men than that they should be weary and heavy-laden; He insisted that they should be convinced of their vileness on the one hand, and on the other of God's justice

and sovereignty. We are commanded to "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may in due time raise us up."

No Gospel convert was ever asked, Are you content to be damned ? Never was such a condition of utter humiliation demanded of any one. It is replied that no one who resists God, no one who had a proud rebellious spirit, is ever accepted of Him; and that is equivalent to saying that a very large measure of humiliation is required before a man can come to Christ.

All that is required surely is a willingness to come to Christ ? That is not enough, says Fraser; men must first realise their sin and misery.

To be content to be damned is a state of humiliation contrary to man's nature, and therefore it is absurd to demand it as a prelude to faith. But, says Fraser, there are times when we must be ready to do things contrary to our nature and destructive of our happiness; such things are sometimes necessary for our welfare in the highest sense.

How can a soul ever be content to be damned ? A soul, replies Fraser, may submit to a thing which glorifies God even though in itself it may be most unpleasant; "the innocent nature of Christ had an aversion to the cup He was to drink, yet He heartily submitted to it, as it was the object of God's good pleasure."

Is it right and proper for a preacher to tell a poor sinner smarting under God's wrath that he must be content to

be damned before he can get Christ ? By doing everything he can to bring a sinner to a due sense of his sin, says Fraser, a preacher is really helping to remove stumbling-blocks out of his way, and that is always a proper thing to do.

Surely we ought to desire to have Christ, but Shepard, according to Firmin, held that we ought to be content to do without Him. Nowhere, replies Fraser, did Shepard hold that a man should be content to be without Christ, for that is unbelief. It is the duty of everyone to desire to have Christ, and to strive to have Him, but a man must be ready to do without Him, if that be the will of God for him.

Should a man ever entertain such thoughts as that God may damn him, or refuse him grace ? Do such thoughts not clash with the reality of the Gospel offer ? There is nothing wrong in entertaining such thoughts, says Fraser, though these things may never come to pass; the point is that submission to the will of God, which may conceivably include damnation for us, is a duty imposed upon us all.

Fraser concludes by summing up Shepard's position with regard to the necessity of humiliation thus :- "Such a frame of spirit as takes away murmuring and pride is needful ere the soul can come to Christ, and ere Christ can bestow Himself on the soul."

In the last section of this chapter Fraser speaks of those who have never had faith. It is quite evident, he says, that the heart must in some way be wrought upon by the Spirit

of God before it can believe; it follows from this that the number of true believers must be comparatively small for not many hearts have really been changed. There are at least seven classes of men, he continues, who have never been wrought upon by God's Spirit, and so have never had real faith.

There are the ignorant sinners who have never known their sin, misery, and woeful condition by nature. "Thou therefore that to this day didst never experimentally find the evils and plagues of thy heart, and see thy great need of Christ, and hence trustest in thy heart, and lippenest to thy aims and desires, and never didst hear any of God's challenges by the Law, thou art yet in thy sins; thou never to this day didst believe, but art alive without the Law."

There are the secure, hard-hearted sinners who by reading and good education know more than their neighbours yet are affected neither by the Law nor by the Gospel, because the Spirit of God has never revealed the truths of either to them.

There are those whose hearts have never been broken from the world; until a man is divorced from the world and all its vanities by the power of God he is still a stranger to Christ: no man can serve two masters.

There are those who have never been convinced of their original sin and guilt, their miserable state, and their utter impotence to do anything for themselves.

There are those who have never died to the Law, and so



cannot be married to Christ.

There are those who, though convinced of the necessity of resting upon Christ's merits alone for justification, do not receive this truth in love; their understanding accepts the Gospel, but their hearts do not believe it unto salvation.

Finally, there are the proud, quarrelling sinners who murmur against God, refusing to submit humbly to Him; the man who tries to please God by his works, and who when that attempt fails turns against Him, is a man who has never had real faith.

In the <sup>fifth</sup>~~fourth~~ chapter of the Treatise Fraser deals with the efficient cause of faith.

He holds that God is to be regarded as faith's efficient cause. In a sense, of course, everything is from Him, for "in Him we live, and move, and have our being," but He is in a very special manner the cause of faith, for man is not naturally disposed to believe, and so must be wrought upon by supernatural influences before he can have faith.

The truth of this assertion is borne out by various things. Scripture, for example, calls faith "the gift of God." Man is dead in trespasses and sins, and therefore can no more move towards Christ by his own strength than a dead man can walk or move till he is quickened. In all of us there are "mighty contrary dispositions to believing;" we "love darkness rather than light;" and so until God draws us we are unable to come. Faith is virtually an act of

creation, and creation is something which is outwith men's power. The Gospel, which is necessary for faith, is supernatural. Even when the Gospel is made known to us, and Christ revealed in it, yet such is our blindness that we require further enlightenment; "the object is clear enough in itself, but men want eyes, and a light to see what is holden forth." It is God's purpose that the believer should owe all his salvation to Christ. Finally, the experience of all the saints who have groaned under the power of unbelief makes it quite clear that "this grace of faith is not of ourselves, but is from God in a special manner."

The question may be asked, How does God produce faith in men ? Fraser replies that God works true saving faith in the hearts of all His elect by drawing them to Christ, and this drawing is in seven stages :-

First there is a work of humiliation by which the soul is emptied of self and self-righteousness, and so made fit to receive Christ and all His benefits. Before you can fill a vessel, says Fraser, you must first empty it, or to change the metaphor, "the hammer of the Lord maketh the rough, rugged, unpolished stones smooth; and so fit for the spiritual building."

There follows a work of illumination whereby the soul is made to see Christ in His personal glory, full of grace and truth, and also all the great and glorious privileges of believers; this light which God causes to shine in the heart is the glorious light of the Gospel.

Thereafter there comes a work of application whereby the spiritual glory, excellency, and sufficiency which are in Christ, and the possibility of salvation, are brought near to the soul, and applied particularly to it; "this is to thee, poor soul," God Says, "thou art concerned and interested in all this glory."

Next comes a work of vocation by which "the Lord lays His earnest commands and intreaties upon the soul, earnestly, importunately, uninterruptedly and constantly to receive and believe upon Him, whereby the soul is made to see not only a possibility of recovery, and of help for it; but now it is made to see that God desires it above all things, that it should come to Him."

This is followed by a work of vivification and quickening whereby the will and the affections are kindled by the glad tidings of the Gospel.

Then comes a work of enlightenment whereby the objections raised by the devil and by man's own unbelief are answered.

Lastly there is a work of union by which the soul is linked to Christ by an efficacious moving of the will actually to close with Him and to receive Him.

Fraser concludes this section by saying that "something of these sevenfold operations every soul married to Christ, and drawn to Him, doth really find, though all find them not so distinctly and sensibly, nor so successively in this order described .... This work is in all, though not in all that are drawn in so sensible and successive a manner."

The question now arises, How does God draw men to Himself ? He deals particularly, says Fraser, with every sinner whom He draws to Himself, i.e. He deals with each individually. "I have called thee by thy name," He says. Remission of sins and the glad tidings of the Gospel are offered to each individual; "the Lord takes the soul aside from out of the crowd, and speaks to it by name and surname."

He draws the soul really, i.e. not in jest or in sport, but in earnest. "Christ is very serious with the soul, and the matters about which the Spirit treats with the soul are of high, grave, and serious importance; redemption from wrath, everlasting death, devil and sin, are not fancies and toys."

He draws the soul earnestly. "Christ is importunate in His invitations .... holding forth His hands all day, giving new onsets, never giving over, soliciting the matter, and handling it so hotly as the soul cannot be but convinced that Christ is now in good earnest, and bent upon the bargain, and ye know importunity prevails much."

He draws the soul irresistibly, either by a physical work on the will, or by a strong moral persuasion. "The sinner's need is so great, and the mercy so rich and full, and the soul's title and call so clear, and Christ the wooer managing all these advantages with the greatest love, kindness, wisdom, and so earnestly, importunately, that the soul is irresistibly laid hold on, and made to say, Lord

Jesus, thou hast overcome me, and I can no longer resist, but yield."

He draws the soul clearly. i.e. by clear demonstration. "Man's inability is clearly seen, the offer is fully cleared, Christ's good will and mind to the bargain fully cleared, as the soul can no longer doubt."

He draws the soul gradually. He works by degrees; light and knowledge grow from less to more.

Finally, He works affectionately. "The Lord manifests such love, which so warms the heart that it cannot resist, the calls thereof are a vehement fire: Christ sets Himself in a lovely posture, when He courts sinners: love constrains."

In the closing section of the chapter Fraser deals with some of the uses and practical instructions which flow from what he has just said. He begins by pointing out that to recall that faith is not of ourselves but is the gift of God is a source of consolation. "Look to Him," he says, "who not only pays the prisoner's ransom and debt, for which he is shut in, but with a strong hand comes and brings the captive out, breaking all his chains, and the doors that were shut upon him."

Again, the doctrine that faith is the gift of God can be used to confute "Arminians, Quakers and Papists, who maintain, indeed, that man of himself can do nothing, but that at certain seasons, when the person is well disposed, say Arminians and Papists, where the light breaks out, say



Quakers, through a new power given and maintained by Christ, which they call universal and sufficient grace, a man having sufficient means, may come to Christ, if he will, on Christ's call, and which call they may likewise resist." All these speak much of the grace of God, but in spite of that they exalt man's free will which is at liberty either to accept or resist God's call. "If Christ hath undertaken Himself to do it," says Fraser, "and to be answerable to the Father for His elect; we must not think that He will commit it to the creature's free will, or leave it at such an uncertainty: no, no, 'tis not of a man, or of the will of man they are born, God giveth the new heart, which can no more resist, than the old heart of stone can yield."

It is evident, he continues, that even among professing Christians there is much unsound and rotten faith; all faith which does not proceed from God, all that is of our own framing and hammering out, is unsound. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we should make sure that our faith is that which comes only by the special operation of God's Spirit. Fraser offers certain signs by which we may test our faith :- No faith that is easily come by is the faith which is the gift of God .... If we have never found any difficulty in believing, if we have not been made to groan under the great power of unbelief, then any faith we may have is not from God, but is of our own framing, a mere natural faith that will never save us, nor unite us to

Christ .... The faith which is from God proceeds and grows out of the destruction and death of its opposite, worldly self-confidence; "if thy heart never found the bitterness of sin, emptiness of the world, sinfulness and insufficiency of all duties, but lives trusting in them: 'tis not a faith of the operation of God." .... The faith which is from God is begotten, maintained, and nourished by prayer; no other faith will bear us up in the day of visitation .... When God works this special saving faith in the heart He reveals His hand in it, and shows that it is from Him .... If our faith is that which comes from God the Gospel of His grace will apprehend and overcome us before we apprehend Him.... The faith which is from God shows itself by making the soul come willingly and freely to Christ; "when the Lord draws, then the heart runs, believing is then easy" .... The faith which is of God's working carries the soul in whom it is wrought to God "in a marvellous estimation of Him, and earnest desire after him" .... This faith is a powerful and efficacious faith, quickening the soul, and powerfully operating upon it.

The assurance that faith is the gift of God, Fraser goes on, arouses in us, or at least should arouse in us, a spirit of thankfulness. We should never have seen our sin and misery had not God's Spirit convinced us of them; we should have continued in the pit of perdition had not the Lord come and drawn us out.

Finally, some words of caution have to be spoken. Let

us remember that no one can believe except the Lord quicken him; at the same time believing is always a duty laid upon us, and our very inability to do so of ourselves should send us to Christ .... Though it is God who causes us to believe it is we, and not He, who believe .... Though it is God who works faith in us, we are not mere blocks and stones .... Once we are quickened we act as living beings .... Not only faith but all natural actions proceed from God.

The sixth and final chapter of the Treatise is concerned with the end of justifying faith. Faith's ultimate end, according to Fraser, is the glory of God, of whom, and to whom, and through whom are all things. To God's glory we ought not only to eat and drink but also to believe.

But faith has an immediate end as well as an ultimate end, and its immediate end is the salvation of the soul - "receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls." This salvation consists in delivery from misery and ~~the~~ from the guilt of sin, union with and enjoyment of Christ, and conformity to God in heart, will and affections, by which we glorify, please and serve Him. The sinner comes to Christ to be quit of the guilt and power of sin, to be justified, reconciled, and put in a state of favour, to be pardoned and to have all the effects of sin, present and to come, removed, to get Christ Himself and to honour and glorify Him.

Fraser ends his Treatise by affirming that it is God's end in the Gospel that men might believe and be saved, and

it is the soul's end in coming to Christ that it might have this salvation and life. By the following signs we may judge of the sincerity of our coming to Christ :- if we come to honour Him; if we come to receive all His benefits, and not just some; if we come to Him for Himself; and if we come not <sup>only</sup> for peace, quietness and comfort, but also for heart-satisfaction.

Fraser has packed so much into this first part of his Treatise on Faith that the foregoing summary of its arguments and conclusions, lengthy though it is, is not to be regarded as more than a somewhat inadequate abridgement of a weighty and carefully thought out essay on the act, manner, object, subject, cause, and end of justifying faith. From this summary the main outline not only of Fraser's view of faith but also of his theology as a whole will, it is believed, have become clear.

Before passing to consideration of the second part of Treatise, to which the following chapter of the thesis is devoted, one or two points call for a word of comment.

First of all, it will have been noted that in this Treatise, as in almost all of the works of Fraser which have already been dealt with, there are very distinct traces of his great debt to the Marrow theology. This is particularly true of the section which deals with the things with which justifying faith is not to be equated. For example, he says that faith is not "an assent to the truths of the

Gospel, with an estimation of them, with a sincere purpose of Gospel obedience, and so consisting of a complex of many acts; for let men say and pretend what they will, here is nothing but a new covenant of works on some milder terms, and accommodated some way to our weakness. The Apostle, - Rom. v. 11. 'If it were of works, it were no more of grace' - doth not say, were it of perfect work, or of works wrought by our own power, it were not of grace, but of works indefinitely; therefore, whatever establisheth salvation upon anything we do unto the Lord, or wherein we may glory, must be renounced here." The dominant note there, as in many other passages in the Treatise, is distinctively Marrow.

In the second place, one finds in this part of the Treatise, various hints and foreshadowings of the particular type of universalist theory which the author was to state more explicitly and categorically in the second part. For example, when he deals with the question of the particular application of the promises of the Gospel the conclusions to which he comes are consistent only with his special theory, and can be accepted only by those who believe that that particular theory offers the most logical as well as the most Scriptural explanation of the extent of the Atonement.



## C H A P T E R   XIV

### THE FAITH TREATISES

#### (c) THE SECOND TREATISE

(1749).

It will be remembered that in his introduction to the first part of the Treatise on Faith Fraser stated that there was a second part in which he handled the grounds of faith, together with an appendix concerning the objective extent of Christ's death, and a concluding section containing several Scripture metaphors and notions under which faith is held forth to men. It was not until 1749 that this second part, which is unquestionably Fraser's magnum opus, appeared. The full title is :- "A Treatise on Justifying Faith, wherein is opened the Grounds of Believing, or the Sinner's sufficient Warrant to take hold of what is offered in the everlasting Gospel, together with an Appendix concerning the Extent of Christ's Death, unfolding the dangerous and various pernicious Errors that hath been vented about it."

In his advertisement the publisher refers to the fact that the first part of the Treatise was sold out. "The first part," he says, "treats on the Nature and Object of

Faith, and this on the Grounds of Faith. Any who incline to have the first part may signify the same by Word or Writ, and if this shall meet with good entertainment it shall not be long till they shall have the other also." Apparently the publisher did not receive sufficient encouragement for the first part of the Treatise was not reprinted.

In his Letter to the Reader the publisher, who is anonymous though it is easy to gather from what he says that he is a supporter of the Secession, speaks of faith as "a doctrine absolutely necessary for the soul's right apprehending of and taking hold of Christ and His benefits; without the knowledge of this grace of faith the soul must undoubtedly perish, as faith is the only instrumental hand that takes hold of Christ when perishing in the floods of God's wrath, as a poor man drowning in a water greedily grips to a cord let down to him to draw him out."

Christ, he continues, "is that blessed cord that is let down for perishing sinners to grip to, and by His blood and satisfaction stops all the flood-gates of divine wrath, that all mankind perish not, and the call of the Gospel is, Whosoever takes hold of this cord of the righteousness of Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life; the call of the Gospel is general to all that hear the sound thereof: 'Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.'"

But how are men to come to this cord? The answer is, By faith. But "true ~~and~~ saving faith must have a sure

warrant to fix upon, and the Scripture-warrant is the only ground of true and saving faith." This Scripture-warrant, the publisher believes, Fraser has unfolded in a more clear and ample way than any divine, ancient or modern, has done, especially as regards the main ground of faith in Christ's death and satisfaction.

Of the Appendix concerning the extent of Christ's death the publisher points out that in it Fraser exposes the many dangerous and pernicious errors which have been vented in connection with this important subject, and that he leads men along a middle Path between two dangerous extremes, on the one hand the position taken up by Arminians and Papists, and on the other, the right-hand extreme, that taken up by many divines who were esteemed orthodox in their day. "How necessary such a piece of excellent divinity is at this day is evident," the publisher says, "to those who see but with one eye; how rampant Arminian principles are raging in these isles of Britain and Ireland, is known to the sad experience of many. 'How is our fine gold become dim ! how is the most fine gold changed !'"

The publisher deploras the religious and moral conditions of his time. "The waters of the sanctuary," he says, "are in a great measure puddled with the feet of a carnal ministry that are thrust in to this national Church, by which the Lord's people are scattered like sheep upon the mountains without a shepherd, and forced to seek the bread of their

souls from mountain to mountain. The Spirit of the Lord is much withdrawn from the Gospel and Gospel-ordinances so that there is little to be seen but a form of godliness, wanting the power thereof .... The present generation seems to be fast asleep at this day in carnal security, the pulpits of Scotland being filled with little or nothing but moral harangues, so that a sermon of Seneca's Morals would be as acceptable to many as the precious doctrines of the Gospel .... The corruption of ~~the~~ Church and State hath such a loud cry to heaven that we have ground to fear the Lord is coming out of His place to punish the inhabitants of this land for their iniquities; judgment is already begun at the House of God, and where shall the end thereof be ? O let us send up a cry to heaven that the Lord may yet return and have compassion on us, and heal the backslidings of this Church and Land, and restore the happy privileges to us that this land once a day enjoyed."

In the final paragraph of his Letter the publisher refers to the Lord Jesus "for whose name and testimony this worthy author suffered many hard trials, and hath left on record this Treatise behind him for the use of the following generations." He assures the reader that "it is come to your hand posthumously as he left it, without any alterations, which may be seen by the copy from which it is printed, it being prepared for the press by the author's own hand. And that the Lord Jesus Himself may bless the same to them into

whose hands it shall come in providence is the earnest prayer of him who is your well-wisher."

The Treatise is in eight chapters. In the first of these Fraser deals with the grounds of faith in general.

He holds that if there be not a sufficient ground and warrant for faith there will be no faith, no matter how much one may insist upon its necessity. And God, he says, has given sufficient grounds for faith; doubtless He might have commanded men to believe without giving any grounds, but as a matter of fact His command to believe is a rational one, being based on rational grounds, and so unbelief is inexcusable.

The grounds of faith, he continues, are either extrinsic or intrinsic. The former are those which are external to the object in which we have to believe, e.g. the command of God, while the latter are those things in the object itself which induce us to give assent to it, e.g. the promises of the Gospel. Again, the grounds of faith are either mediate and remote, e.g. the attributes of God, His power, wisdom, faithfulness, and so on; or immediate, e.g. the things held forth to men in the Gospel. Further, a distinction has to be drawn between faith in general, and the grounds upon which it is based; and the faith which saves and justifies, and the ~~faith~~ grounds upon which it in its turn is based. Fraser defines justifying faith as the faith which prompts a soul to look into the Gospel and to Christ, that which explicitly



and formally closes with Christ, and that which induces the soul to rest on Christ, to love Him, and to delight in Him.

A sense of misery and need is not in itself, he continues, a ground of justifying faith, for Christ does not save a man merely because he is humbled and made conscious of his sin. Nor is the testimony of man sufficient in itself as a ground of faith though it may be the means by which God brings us to true saving faith. Nor are the attributes of God by themselves the immediate, adequate, and formal grounds of justifying faith, otherwise there would have been no need for Christ to come into the world, for Adam knew these attributes and believed in them; indeed there would have been no necessity for a supernatural revelation of any kind for these attributes are in a sense engraven on all men's hearts.

Again, the inward objective testimony of the Spirit is not the ground of justifying faith; the operation of the Spirit, it is true, is required to cause us to believe, and to lead us into all truth, but the only objective testimony is that which we find in the Scriptures. Nor is any work of conviction, humiliation, sorrow, or the like, the ground of justifying faith, for all these are within a man, and the ground of faith must be something outside of him.

What then are the grounds of justifying faith? Fraser's answer to this is clear and explicit - "God's gracious call in the Gospel, or the covenant of grace through Christ as holden forth and revealed in God's Word is the only and

adequate ground of believing." In this call he finds six distinct elements, and these he proceeds to elaborate in the chapters which follow. They are : - a declaration that there is a sufficient help or remedy for sinners in Christ Jesus; a revelation of the goodness and tenderness of Christ which confers and bestows this remedy; a kind of title or interest to and in Christ and all His benefits; the death and satisfaction of Jesus Christ to divine justice by His blood shed in our stead, and for our sins; the command of God to embrace freely the offer of Jesus Christ and salvation through His merits; a faithful engagement upon condition of believing that the soul shall actually possess all these things offered unto it in the Gospel, and that they shall assuredly be made forthcoming to the soul that believes.

The second chapter is concerned with the first special ground of faith, namely, Christ's all-sufficiency as held forth in Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him."

There is, says Fraser, a twofold sufficiency in Christ, and in view of our author's universalism the distinction he draws here is to be carefully noted. First of all, he holds that there is in Christ "A naked absolute sufficiency, which is nothing else but the almighty power of Christ God-man, to save whomsoever He will, and the intrinsical merit of His sufferings to satisfy for all the sins that ever were committed against God, whether by men or devils; there is no

sinner that ever was in regard of this absolute sufficiency, but the blood of Christ was of sufficient value to be a satisfaction for his sins, and Christ could, if He would, save him." But there is also in Christ what he calls "an ordinary sufficiency;" the blood of Christ could save all - men or devils - but as a matter of fact it was not shed for all. "It hath not an ordinary sufficiency to save any but such as are contained and comprehended within the act of grace."

The naked sufficiency, His absolute power to save all, is not sufficient ground for us to believe that we shall be saved unless we have in addition some indication of God's goodwill towards us, but at the same time we must believe in it for justifying faith is bottomed upon it. It is also sufficient as a basis for a faith of probability, and to keep men from despair; "it so far lifts up the fainting sinner, as to make him say, It may be the Lord will be gracious to me; and this keeps the soul waiting upon God in the use of means, till He look down from heaven."

Fraser goes on to point out that though more than faith in God's absolute power is required for justifying faith yet even this inadequate faith is a rarer thing than many suppose it to be. Many may indeed believe it theoretically, but only a few believe it practically. And there are some Christians who can testify that they have found it more difficult to believe in God's power than in His goodness. "I have had always no small jealousies," Fraser confesses,

"of such who tell that they have no question of God's power to help them, but they cannot get His goodwill believed; the arm of the Lord is but revealed to few."

Again, even when God's goodwill is questioned faith in His power can lead to the faith that justifies. It is significant that the question Christ was in the habit of putting to those who came to Him for help<sup>y</sup> was : "Believe you that I am able to save you ?" When the power of God is questioned no promise however full or particular can secure the soul.

Fraser is convinced that Christ can supply all that a sinner requires; "there is no wound but He hath a plaister for, no disease but He hath a cure for." Christ is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; He can both wash and heal. We complain of our blindness; He can give light. We need pardon and mercy; His blood cleanses from all sin. He can reconcile us with God; He can save us out of the hands of all our enemies; He can<sup>u</sup> make us perfectly righteous; whatever our wants may be He can give rest to our souls. And when He satisfies a want He does so fully; "He takes away sin fully, He satisfies the justice of God fully, and He will present His Church without spot or wrinkle, wipe all tears from her eyes, and all sorrow and sadness shall flee away; there is not only joy in His presence but fulness thereof and rivers of pleasure for evermore."

If any man says that his sins are so many, so great,

and of such long-standing that there is no hope for him let him be told that Christ can do new things, things that have never been heard of before, things that go beyond what we ask or desire; He can bring up His people even from the grave and from hell. And if it be asked if it is possible for Christ to revoke the sentence which He has already passed upon us, the answer is that He can for "law-sentences, though never so peremptory, are liable to reduction; and though the law of grace the sinner hath the privilege of a new hearing."

There are those who say that they have come to Christ and have failed to find His sufficiency; their wants have not been supplied, nor their sins pardoned and removed. But have they come in the right and proper manner? Has there been anything hypocritical in their coming? It has also to be remembered that Christ does not always show His sufficiency immediately a sinner comes to Him; it is enough for the sinner that Christ should satisfy his wants from day to day; one day he shall be abundantly satisfied with the fullness that is in Christ.

If it be objected that in addition to Christ's sufficiency holiness in ourselves is also necessary to our salvation the answer is that while holiness is required, it is not holiness that saves; only Christ can do that. "It was necessary," says Fraser, "that such as should come to the feast and the marriage of the king's son should have a wedding-garment, yet neither the feast nor the right to come



to it were purchased by the wedding garment."

In this glorious Redeemer, Fraser repeats, the soul finds all that it requires. In Him there is virtue, merit, goodness, condescension, power, patience, glory, excellency, worth, and wisdom. He is a complete, constant and everlasting Redeemer, a perfect, speedy and compassionate helper. Let us therefore cease to trust in our own merits for salvation, and come to Him who can do for us what they can never do; there is help in Him but nowhere else; let us by earnest prayer seek that help; let us continue to wait upon Him, and never give over till He look down from heaven.

There are some, he says, who despise and reject this salvation that is in Christ; "Lord, how is the Gospel this day despised, and esteemed as an old almanac out of date, tasteless as the white of an egg !" But Scripture assures us that all who despise the Gospel will one day be punished.

There are many who do not see that in Christ are to be found all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; through their ignorance they allow the world to fill their lives. But the fault is in themselves; the well is full, <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ if they are still thirsty it is because they have not dr<sup>a</sup>wn water from it. Let them remember too that not all the fullness of Christ is to be enjoyed in this world, yet in the meantime He will give men sufficient to keep their souls in life. If they comp<sup>a</sup>in that they are not altogether spiritual, and

have fleshly desires which Christ cannot satisfy, e.g. for ease, rest, meat, drink, society, and the like, let them remember that these things while lawful in themselves are not of the first importance, and the heart ought not to be allowed to go out excessively or unseasonably after them so as to make men forget God. If again these people say that even saints at times wander from Christ and drink from other cisterns, the answer is that even saints have an unregenerate part in them, and so sometimes depart from the Lord, but when that happens they are never at rest until they have returned to Him.

There are others, Fraser continues, who go to the Law for salvation as though Christ and His grace had to be supplemented by their own efforts. In effect they regard Christ as a Saviour who only half saves. But Scripture knows only one way of salvation and that is by faith alone without the works of the Law; "Scripture mentions no other thing than the merits of Christ received by faith, as that which doth federally entitle us to everlasting life." While the first covenant says, Do this and live, the second says, If thou believest thou shalt be saved; a clear distinction is made between doing and believing, and by the second covenant, the covenant of grace, God has excluded works altogether. To insist then on works is derogatory to the merits and grace of Christ; it is to set up another on the throne on which He alone has the right to sit.

There are those who are puzzled by the assertion that

without holiness no one can see the Lord, feeling that this cannot be reconciled with the thought of Christ's all-sufficiency as a Saviour. Fraser's answer to this is that God does not require holiness in man as a condition of eternal life in the same sense in which He required works under the first covenant. It is true that He commands us to keep the commandments that we may live, to run that we may obtain; it may therefore seem that our doing and our obedience are the condition of life, and that God enjoins us to be holy as the condition of salvation; but this is not so. By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified. Holiness has its value but not as the condition of salvation. "God gives us remission of sins and eternal life freely for the merits of Christ alone received by faith, without the works of the Law; yet hath He purposed to convey this eternal life to be enjoyed, and to which we have ~~the~~ right by purchase, in the order, and channel, and method of holiness; our holiness is not therefore the condition of eternal life."

It is true that there are many persons, Papists for example, who make much of works, but in their case, says Fraser, the aim is to make what they can out of people by laying stress on the merit of works; covetousness is really at the bottom of their teaching. In other cases the covenant of works with its simple, straightforward injunction, Do this and live, makes a strong appeal by its very simplicity and the ease with which it can be understood. In still

other cases stubborn pride makes men unwilling to submit to the righteousness of God; they prefer to establish their own righteousness, the real trouble being that they have no knowledge of the regenerating work of grace in their hearts, subduing their pride and discovering to them the emptiness of all their works.

Fraser concludes this section of the chapter by saying that there are three classes of men who reject Christ and despise His salvation :- the tormented, fearful, despairing sinners who by reason of the number and greatness of their sins decide that there is no hope for them; the bold, hardened and wilfully presumptuous sinners who, knowing that their sins are great and many, decide like the former that there is no hope for them, but thereafter go on to give themselves up to carnal enjoyments; and the sighing, fainting sinners who, faced with their great difficulties, are yet afraid to give up their trust in works though they realise that these are of no avail, and so go on striving until finally they pine away in their iniquities.

Fraser realises that there are many who will be disposed to question what he has said about the all-sufficiency of Christ so now he proceeds to deal with some of the objections to be anticipated. One man, for example, will say that it is impossible for God to forgive him his presumptuous sins; God's honour and glory demand vengeance. But, says Fraser, it is the glory of this king to pass over

transgressions, and as for the satisfaction which His justice demands for the wrongs men have done Him that has already been given by the death of His Son.

Another may say, The door is shut, the time is past, my acceptable day is gone, Christ has given His last knock, and now there is no hope for me ! Can any of us say of a certainty that our day is gone ? Fraser asks. As long as we are in the land of the living our day of grace is still here. But I know that my time is gone, the objector goes on, because the Spirit of God has left off striving with me, and without that Spirit I can never be drawn to God ! The Spirit, Fraser answers, may indeed have been provoked by you to withdraw but He may return; He may even now be striving with you though you are not aware of it; and in any case God is still calling you even when you do not feel the Spirit at work within you.

But, a third may say, no sinner has ever been in such <sup>case</sup> as I ! We all think that, says Fraser, but even if it were true Christ can do a new thing that has never been done before; you may be singular, but "never one did put Christ to His utmost." But I can find no good at all in myself, no sorrow for sin, no desire to pray, no willingness to use means ! Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour who can give not only remission of sins, but repentance to those who cannot so much as repent for what they have done. I cannot conceive that I shall ever obtain mercy or be helped ! The



Lord can do far more than any of us think. My heart is very hard and my plague very great ! The Lord can still help. But I have no heart to go about the means that are necessary ! Strength for that will come from Christ too; look up to Him for it.

In the concluding section of this chapter on the all-sufficiency of Christ Fraser briefly enumerates the things this all-sufficiency includes. There is in it an all-sufficiency of merit, of strength, of wisdom and knowledge, and finally of rest or satisfaction; of merit because in the sufferings and obedience of Christ there is enough to justify us and to make us alive; of strength because through Him we are enabled to do all that is commanded us, and to perform that service of love and thankfulness which we are bound to render; of wisdom because we find sufficient light in Him to guide and direct us into all truth, and to show us the path of life; and of satisfaction because there is enough in Christ to content the heart and to fill all the empty corners of the soul.

Think, he continues, of the worth and excellency of the sufficiency that is in Christ. He answers all the soul's wants; He not only saves, but saves to the uttermost; He not only cures all manner of diseases, but cures them perfectly; He makes us rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; He calms the heart, and gives peace to the soul; He gives far more than the world can give; He seasons every lot, and sweetens and lightens the bitterest and darkest providence; He makes us

see that all else is to be esteemed as worthless when compared with what He can give; He gives us the one thing needful, the pearl of great price; He gives more than the eye can see, the ear hear, or the heart conceive.

This sufficiency of Christ is hid from the eyes of the greater part of mankind, as all spiritual matters are, except in a general way, and until it is made known there can be no drawing-near to Christ. But in the day of His power Christ does reveal the fullness that is in Him; and by this revelation He draws the soul of the sinner affectionately and irresistibly to Himself. By it too He makes spiritual things known as they are in themselves. Whatever knowledge men may have of sin, death, and eternity this revelation of Christ and His all-sufficiency is essential in order that the heart may be united to God. But even this revelation is an imperfect thing, and will <sup>a</sup>always remain so while we are in this world; and further, the sufficiency which it makes known will not satisfy our souls unless we draw near, receive, live upon, and improve it.

The third chapter is devoted to a discussion of the second special ground of faith, namely, Christ's goodwill to sinners, the argument centring round two Scripture texts :- Ezek. xxxiii. 11. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;" and Luke ii. 14. "Goodwill towards men."

Most people, says Fraser, believe that if He will Christ

can make them clean, but the question is, Is He willing ? Fraser's reply is that Christ does not leave any sinner in uncertainty as to His willingness to save him, and this chapter is devoted to a discussion and elucidation of this thought of Christ's goodwill.

To begin with, certain distinctions are drawn, the first of these being with reference to God's will, which, according to Fraser may mean any one of five things. It may mean that part of His essential nature from which all His acts of volition proceed; or that which decrees certain things; or that which shows us what He has laid down as our duty; or that in Him which desires and favours certain things, e.g. righteousness; or that which decrees certain means for certain ends, and so may be said to decree the ends as well as the means.

Again, according to Fraser, a distinction is to be drawn between the nature of a thing, and the existence of it. A man may will that a certain thing should exist, but not will that thing in its nature; for example, "Christ willed His own death as to the existence of it ... but death in its own nature was displeasing to Him, and so He might be said not to will it." Fraser confesses, however, that most learned philosophers deny that any such distinction exists.

Then there are certain distinctions in God Himself; He is to be regarded either as a sovereign Lord doing what He will with His children; or as He has revealed Himself in Christ, one who is good and gracious, one who has no fury in

Him, one who is well pleased and full of grace and truth; or as the ruler of the world, actually governing it by laws.

Man also is to be considered under three aspects: as a creature, the workmanship of God; as purely and simply fallen in Adam; and as a final, wilful rejecter of the Gospel.

Finally, evils may be considered as they are in themselves, "the torment and destruction of the creature on which they are inflicted," or as the means by which the glory of God is manifested.

Having made these distinctions Fraser proceeds to deal with certain truths which he regards as fundamental. As these bear directly on his particular type of universalism they deserve the closest attention. First of all, God, he holds, does not will the salvation of all men, nor does He purpose to save all men, for then should all be saved. In fact he maintains that "God hath decreed that the most of men shall be eternally damned and perish." When he speaks of God's general goodwill he is careful to point out that he does not mean any general indefinite or universal election.

Again, he holds that as the election of some to glory is not properly the ground of faith so the decree of reprobation is not to be regarded as the ground of unbelief or refusal to believe. Man must act independently of such considerations; the revealed command of God should be the ground of His obedience, and the revealed truth of God's promise the ground of his belief.

The misery of reprobates, he says, is not in itself a thing pleasing to God. He wills it not as an end in itself but only as a means by which His justice, wrath and power are to be manifested. For the manifestation of these latter God wills the misery and damnation of some, but Christ does in a real sense pity such as are given up to their hearts' lusts, and punished for their sins; His tears for them are genuine.

There are four senses, he continues, in which it can be held that God has a desire that all should be saved. He has laid it upon men as a duty to do those things which mean salvation; the salvation of all would be a thing pleasing to Him; The means and ordinances which He has appointed for salvation are open to all; and finally, the means He bestows and the pains He takes are the signs of one who is willing that all should be saved.

Further, God has decreed that duty and happiness should be linked together; where duty is done happiness will follow. But He has not decreed that all should do what is their duty. Samuel said to Saul, "If thou hadst obeyed the commandment of the Lord, God would have now established thy kingdom." But, says Fraser, "God never decreed that Saul should either obey, or have the kingdom established."

Finally, he repeats what he has already said about the distinction to be drawn between God as sovereign Lord, and as He is revealed in Christ. In Christ He sits upon a throne of mercy, and so neither wills nor issues any sentence of



condemnation, but as sovereign He wills that some should be damned for their sins, and shall at the last day damn and curse thousands.

Having made clear the sense in which he holds that there is a general goodwill in God towards mankind, especially to those within the visible Church, Fraser now attempts to prove from Scripture that such a general goodwill does in fact exist.

In Luke we read of "goodwill towards men"; in Second Peter we are told that "God is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"; and in Ezekiel we are assured that "He delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but rather that a sinner live."

The reality and fervour of this goodwill is further borne out by the most serious, earnest, hearty, pressing, and importunate commands, invitations, and exhortations of Christ to sinners all designed to make them turn and live. These are not, as some suppose, directed only to the elect. Even the threats used to those who will not turn are evidences of the existence of a general goodwill.

Scripture again shows the Lord calling for men's love and refusing to be put off with a refusal, and as grieved when men finally reject Him and destroy themselves. He is portrayed as waiting and longing for man's return to Him, and as willing to forgive all that we owe Him. When we do return He rejoices and is well pleased. All this, says Fraser, surely proves His general goodwill to men. But it is to be

noted that this general goodwill is distinct from the special goodwill God has to the elect, and which is not universal; this latter Fraser calls "the favour of God's people."

Why should God have this general goodwill to men ? To this question Fraser replies that there is really no explanation apart from God's good pleasure. He chooses to have it and it is His nature to be compassionate, merciful and gracious; and being holy He desires the sanctification of all. The important point is that as He is truth His invitations and commands may be accepted as true; there is no dissembling when He asks men to return. Through the mediation of Christ wrath is really removed, and peace on earth and goodwill towards men proclaimed.

In what sense is this general goodwill a ground of faith ? How does it afford encouragement to come to Christ ? Our faith, says Fraser, is pleasing to this God of goodwill, this Father who is "not of a tigerish and bloody disposition." Further, it strengthens our expectations in Him. Will not He who is compassionate pity us and supply our need ? Will not He help us who never did cast off any who came to Him ? He who never sent any away with a sore heart ? This thought of His goodwill takes away our natural aversion to God; no longer does He appear to us as a hard and severe master, or an inexorable enemy.

But are there not times, it will be asked, when God is angry with us, and hides His face from us ? His anger, it

is replied, endures only for a moment, and in the midst of wrath He remembers mercy; further, the purpose of His anger is to turn us to Himself, it is meant to put our faith to the test and to strengthen it.

Unless we can also believe in a special goodwill what advantage is there in believing in a general goodwill? This general goodwill is enough to give us grounds for coming to Christ; it encourages us to believe that He will be gracious, and when we do come to Him it may well be that we shall find that special goodwill for which we long.

But the Lord has not shown His goodwill to us in particular; it is all general, and vague, and indefinite! The Gospel, be it remembered, speaks to all who have ears to hear, though their names be not expressly mentioned. All the invitations, commands and exhortations in Scripture we are to regard as meant for us as individuals.

What comfort is there in believing in a general goodwill when we know that it may turn out that we shall be numbered among those who are to be damned or reprobated? We are not to concern ourselves about election or reprobation, says Fraser, but each of us is to think of himself as "a fallen sinner in Adam whom Christ is sent to save, and to whom His philanthropy or mankind-love hath appeared; the secret things belong to God; His command is my rule, not what is His intention, which as I cannot know for the present, so I am not called thereunto."

If God has willed the eternal misery and destruction of some, what point is there in speaking of His general goodwill since in these cases at least it is a mockery? Fraser's answer to this objection is in the main a repetition of the distinction which he has already drawn between God as sovereign Lord, and God as revealed in Christ. God as sovereign reprobates and damns; God in Christ draws and invites men to Himself. "Consider God as sovereign Lord doing what He will; then I confess He likes some better than others, and wills some to be saved and to believe, and others to be damned, on whom He never for this effect purposes to confer any saving grace: but then consider the gracious nature of God, or God in Christ, in the dispensation of the Gospel, in which respect thou only hast to do with Him; then I say He desires thy conversion and salvation, but not thy death; now Christ doth not invite, draw, desire thy salvation, and grieve for thy sin and misery under the same consideration that He reprobates or damns." "God pities men," he continues, "and wills his salvation, as he is His creature, and fallen in Adam; but He damns him as finally unbelieving; for though I do not think that man's foreknown sin was the cause of the decree of reprobation, yet I think the decree of reprobation did ordain men to torment as they were sinners, because as such they were fit only to shew God's justice, the manifestation of which was God's utmost end or intention, in order to which man's damnation, sin, creation were but co-ordinate means." Once

again he insists that we have no concern with - "nothing adoe in," as he phrases it - God's sovereign acts of reprobation or damnation; what we are concerned with is "God in Christ in the Gospel, in whom is no fury, but only goodwill, grace and truth." "Therefore," he concludes, "in the Lord with whom we have to do there is not only ground of faith, hope or confidence, but likewise there is no ground of fear, and they that but know Him will and must put their trust in Him."

Can we really speak of the existence in God of such passions as love, anger, hatred, pity, goodwill? Not in the sense in which these are in men, replies Fraser, yet there is that in God which can best be expressed by these terms.

I am so vile and sinful, some one may object, that I cannot think of God as doing anything but hating me! Not even the sins of the whole world, says Fraser, can overcome the love of God. "As it is alike to infinite power to save with many or with few, so it is alike to infinite goodness to pity and pardon great sins as lesser faults; the greatest mountains are as easily swallowed up in this infinite ocean as the smallest pebble stones that are cast therein; all mountains are alike plain to grace."

If the Lord is as willing as all this that I should come to Him and be saved why does He not draw me irresistibly to Himself? Possibly He will in the end, says Fraser; but if He does it will be by no other method than by declaring as He does now His willingness that you should be saved, and by



the same invitations and commands that you already know. So "suffer these cords the Gospel lets down to thee to get hold of thee."

Has the Lord not already passed judgment upon me and given me up to my lusts ? Even so He still pities you and mourns over you, as Christ did over Jerusalem, and therefore there is still a thread of hope for you.

It may be asked, Of what practical value is this belief in the general goodwill of God to men ? First, says Fraser, it refutes those who hold that God is not concerned at all in the affairs of His creatures, and that His expressions of tenderness, love and goodwill are not indicative of anything which actually exists in Him.

Again, it confutes "Arminians, free-willers, and other proud enemies to the grace of God" who slander us by saying that in effect we believe that all God's commands, complaints and exhortations are but illusions, fancies, traps, snares and dissimulations.

Further, it encourages us to believe on the name of the Lord Jesus by showing us that He delights not in our death, but really wishes us to turn and live.

It also shows how mistaken those are who hold that all the commands, invitations, and complaints in the Gospel are directed to the elect only and that others have no concern with them. Fraser's point here is of importance for the understanding of his universalism, and the whole paragraph

must be given. "See how little truth is in that which some say, viz. that all commands, invitations, complaints, etc. in the Gospel, are directed only to the elect, and that others are not comprehended or concerned in these things, but that reprobates by the providence of God being cast among the elect, hence they accidentally hear them, but that they are not truly and really called in the Gospel, nor the privileges of the Gospel holden out to them, that yet however reprobates are rendered thereby more inexcusable. This if I conceive it aright, is contrary to the Scriptures and an error of dangerous import however maintained by some great and godly men. I grant indeed that it is for the elect's sake that the Gospel is principally sent to any, and that by the elect they enjoy many merciful privileges that otherwise they should never have had; and I finally grant that in the offers of the Gospel, that however ministers preach to all indefinitely, as not knowing who are elect and who are not; that yet the Lord in the offers of salvation doth only intend the salvation of His elect, and to bestow these things holden out in the Gospel on them only; but to say that these invitations do not reach and bind all that hear them so as to be the warrant and ground for them to believe and accept of the same, in which case they were to expect salvation, and in case of disobedience to the Gospel to be liable to Gospel wrath for a slighted rejected Saviour come to save them: to say this, I say, is of more dangerous consequence than folk

are aware, for besides that it is contrary expressly to the Scriptures, which tells us that 'many are called but few chosen;' here is a ground laid down to overturn all the foundations of faith revealed in the Word of God, and wait for revelations, or feeling of the instinct that these authors speak of to certify them that they are the elect, hence likewise they were not guilty of the sin of unbelief, because the command and offer of Christ is not really to them as from God, and except we reject the Lord however we refuse men there is no hazard."

Again, says Fraser, this doctrine of God's goodwill is a consolation to all the Lord's people and to all who hear the Gospel for it assures them that they have a gracious God to deal with, and a tender-hearted compassionate Saviour who is willing and desirous that they should be saved.

Finally, Fraser warns us to beware of certain extreme views, e.g. that God has passions similar to ours; that He is mutable, calling men to Himself at one time, and at another casting them off; that He has an equal goodwill to all, both elect and reprobate (reprobates have no share, says Fraser, in elective love); that His goodwill is due to anything outside of Himself (it is in fact, says Fraser, "an action or emanation of the essential goodness of God which He freely vents towards such and such objects"); that there is in man any subjective grace or any self-determining principle to what is good; or that God is dependent for His happiness upon the creature, seeing He has all life in Himself.

In the fourth chapter Fraser turns to what he calls the third special ground of faith, namely, the sinner's title and right to Christ and all His benefits, conferred by the covenant of grace or free promises of God. He quotes Rom. ix. 4. "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," and Acts ii. 38, 39. "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins .... for the promise is unto you, and to your children."

He confesses at the outset that there are many who deny that the sinner has any title or right to these benefits, affirming that it is by faith alone that men receive salvation. "For my part," he continues, "I do not willingly state myself as a party opponent to any, much less to a stream of godly men, from whom to differ, or to walk in a singular road is a terror to me, and with whom I would not only think but speak the same things." Yet he feels bound to maintain that sinners even before they believe have a certain kind of title or right to the Gospel promises. Though he may seem to differ from others in maintaining this he hopes that at bottom he and they will be found to believe the same thing.

To begin with, he points out that there are several kinds of rights, and that it is important to be clear as to what right it is that sinners have to the Gospel promises. He holds that no one, believer or unbeliever, has a "natural right"

to these, for all that God gives is of grace, not of necessity; no one can claim that he has a right, in the ordinary sense of the word, to the benefits of the Gospel.

Further, unbelievers have no "actual, consummate, complete, and formal right" to the promises, for such a right comes only through faith, nor do they have what Fraser calls "an aptitudinary immediate right," such a right as a man has who comes to his majority and so is fitted to enter into possession of what rightfully belongs to him but which he was unable really to possess while he was still a minor. Nor do believers have a "judicial right" to the promises, i.e. such a right as comes by the action of a judge discerning or declaring that the sentence of condemnation has been removed, for that sentence still stands until men come to believe.

The right which unbelievers have to the promises is, according to Fraser, a "mediate" one through Christ to whom these promises were first given, and who alone can dispense them to men, whether believers or unbelievers. They also have what he calls an "imperfect and remote" title to the promises; they do not possess them now but they may possess them in the future: to enter into full possession of them requires an act of faith.

Next, Fraser lays down several propositions relative to this right which sinners have to the Gospel promises.

What is held forth in the Gospel for them to receive is Christ Himself, and all that the Scriptures call "the



unsearchable riches of Christ" - sanctification, grace, glory, life, salvation.

These are held forth by way of a promise, and this promise is an absolute one; it depends upon nothing in us: for its accomplishment it depends upon God alone. If it depended upon us it would be upon our works, not upon our faith; and it would not be free.

The promises were first given to Christ in order that they might be transmitted to men; "He received them as a steward to dispense what was entrusted to Him to them to whom they were appointed."

These promises were given to sinners, not immediately, but mediately through Christ; whatever is done by Him as our attorney, or received by Him, redounds to us and is placed "on our score." "Our Lord," says Fraser, "being under no conjunct obligation with men for obedience to God, hence whatever He did in order to satisfaction to divine justice, He did it not only in our persons, but to our behalf and advantage, and therefore did we in Him satisfy justice, and we in Him were discharged, and had promises given to us in Him of what pertained to life and godliness." By way of a parenthesis he deals with the vexed question of the heathen. "How Christ did for heathens that never heard the sound of the Gospel, whether He received moral gifts for them which He did bestow, or whether He satisfied divine justice and merited eternal life, so as notwithstanding of His purchase He might be

free to reveal this to them or not, is a mystery of which we have little ground in Scripture to walk upon." He holds that before Christ can condemn any for contempt of the Gospel He is first bound to declare what He did for them; those He condemns He condemns for slighting His grace offered in the Gospel. "His first office is to preach glad tidings, to hold out the golden sceptre that the world might believe and be saved, but when the world misbelieves Christ (for a great part of them did) Christ secondarily condemns and per accidens."

This right and promise of all benefits through Christ is proclaimed, declared and held forth to sinners by His ambassadors, for an act of grace confers not remission till it be published; hence, says Fraser, adding to what he has already said in this connection, the heathen who have never heard tell of Christ have no right to Him, nor to remission of sins.

This absolute promise of life and salvation through Christ is the seed and ground of faith, and not grounded upon faith, as some hold; the promise, in other words, is before faith, and not dependent upon an act of belief in man.

This offer of Christ to sinners involves no untruth, no impossibility; "it could not declare remission of sins to any if they had no interest in remission of sins."

The promise is to all without exception; there are no reservations in it.

By these promises God is engaged to perform whatever is contained in them to all those who lay hold on and believe

them. "Though the thing promised will only be fulfilled to him who receives it, yet the very promises themselves antedecede to our faith confer a right and ground to them ~~wh~~ to whom they are declared to receive them."

All, in short, to whom the Gospel comes have a right to the benefits of the new covenant, and by faith these promises become theirs actually and completely, in order that the Lord Jesus may be enjoyed, and completely and eternally possessed by them.

All within the visible Church, Fraser continues, have a right to the benefits and privileges offered and held forth in the Gospel. Scripture offers them to all, though not all accept them. "Even as the body of the Jews had a promise of the earthly Canaan, it was given them, and yet many, yea the most part, never saw, nor entered in because of their unbelief: so may the heavenly Canaan be given, promised, and holden forth and yet through unbelief most come short."

Again, we are commanded to draw near to Christ with confidence and full assurance, but unless we know that we have a right to Him we can have no confidence or assurance.

The promise which conveys the inheritance is the ground of faith, and therefore prior to it and independent of it; whether we have faith or not the promise is offered to us all.

We are asked to believe the Gospel, and the Gospel proclaims as a faithful saying that Christ came to save sinners, and that in Him all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

But how can we believe this unless we too are really concerned in it ?

Just as all the Jews had a right to the cities of refuge so all within the visible Church have a right to Christ and all His benefits.

When the Gospel declares a thing to us, and holds it out, and offers it for us to receive, that surely means that we have a right to it.

If only some within the visible Church have a right to the promises that means that the Gospel is not good tidings to all men, but only to such as believe.

If the Gospel does not convey a right to the privileges it offers then none can meddle with or receive its benefits.

If our right to the promises is dependent upon our faith then the freedom of the covenant of grace is compromised.

No other consideration can yield the same confidence as the thought that the promises are for all. For example, it is not enough to assure a man that Christ came to save sinners for he may turn round and say that He came to save only elect sinners. He must have some sure ground for believing that he personally is included, and the only sure ground is the assurance that the promises are freely offered to all.

In the Gospel we find everything necessary to a right and title to the promises. We have in the Gospel all that we need to assure us of our right to Christ.

Finally, by the seal of baptism we are given a title to

the privileges of that covenant of which it is the seal.

But, some one may object, to say that even unregenerate men have a right and title to the promises is likely to harden them in sin and to lead them to presume ! Like every other doctrine, Fraser replies, this one may be made a stone of stumbling by some people, but normally it leads not to presumption but to a confident approach to the throne of grace, and a thankful acceptance of Christ and His benefits.

Do we not make the faith of God of none effect if we think of Him as giving promises which in the case of some will never be fulfilled ? Not so, for the promises are declarative, not of what must come to pass, but only of men's right and title; they are the ground upon which faith can be built up.

Are not all the promises made to believers and to those who have already attained to holiness ? There are two kinds of promises - those intended for believers only (the promises made to faith), and those which are for all (those which beget faith).

If the promises are for the unregenerate as well as for believers does that not mean that men may be at one and the same time both heirs of wrath and heirs of salvation ? Fraser holds that in a sense they may; they may be "titularly, having a mediate remote title, heirs of salvation," and at the same time "actually and formally .... children of wrath and under condemnation."



Are not the promises conditional seeing our possession of what is promised in them depends on faith ? No, says Fraser; these promises are absolute. "The promises of the Gospel absolutely conveyed, published and holden forth to every one in the visible Church to lay hold upon, are truly absolute, though it be true that except we receive them by faith, these good things in them contained shall never be made out to us."

Is there any real advantage in having this title to the promises if the good things contained in them are not thereby conferred but depend upon the fulfilling of certain conditions ? The answer is that in the promises we find a sufficient ground for faith, and that is a great matter.

If a man lacks the power, or the grace, to believe what advantage is it to have the promises ? The Lord may yet give him the power and the grace he needs to take advantage of what the promises hold out to him.

Is it not the case that the promises belong only to the elect, who alone are appointed heirs of the promises ? Fraser's answer to this question is important for the understanding of his whole position. "It is true," he says, "that in respect of God's effectual purpose and intention to confer the benefits of the promise, the promises belong only to the elect and the seed, in regard the elect are these only who by faith close with the promises and live upon them; the rest of the world are strangers to this food, and therefore

are not called children of the promise. But then look to the promise itself, it is appointed and destinated for all: the city of refuge was equally appointed for all that killed a man unawares, and he that fled not to it had as good right thereunto as he who fled if he killed the man unawares, for in respect of God's revealed will it was destinated for all; but the Lord by His secret will intended it but for the advantage of a few .... To conclude then, I say that the elect are the only children and heirs of the promise, because they only close with it and in God's appointment and intent they only are to partake of the benefit, but the promise in itself considered equally respects all."

If the promises are for unregenerate persons as well as for believers does that not mean that we are to speak peace to them, and surely no one ought to speak peace to the wicked? It is true that there is no real peace for the wicked but that does not mean that we are debarred from holding out any hope to them. Like Paul we must beseech them to be reconciled, and the ground we have for doing so is that the promises are for them as well as for others.

If the promises are for all what advantage has the believer over the unbeliever? The believer who has closed with Christ has possession of what is promised while the unbeliever has as yet only the promise; he is still under the sentence of condemnation, and may indeed remain so for ever.

A man may say that he has no inward call stirring him

to apply the promises to himself, and so cannot believe they ~~are~~ intended for him. While we need the inward working of God's Spirit upon our hearts before we can believe, yet the ground of believing is not an inward call but God's promise revealed in His Word.

Is it not the case that the promises are for the weary and the heavy-laden and for them ~~alone~~ ? These are not the conditions upon which men have a right to Christ; they are only the things which will help us to turn to Him.

Can a person as sinful as I am have a right to the promises ? No sin can deprive us of our right. Sins do not incapacitate us from coming to Christ, rather are they the ground of our coming to Him, and His coming to us; "if you ~~are~~ were not a sinner, you would have nothing adoe with Christ as a Saviour or physician."

Is it not the case, as so many divines hold, that we have no interest in Christ until we believe in Him ? In a sense this is true, Fraser admits; it is faith that gives an interest in the promises, and unregenerate persons have not the same interest in them as believers. Still "faith is bottomed on the promises," and "we are to preach the Gospel to all, and every one is so far concerned in the free grace of God absolutely holden forth that he may and ought to lay hold thereon."

How does the right to the promises come to us, and how is it a ground of faith ? In answer to the first of these

questions Fraser says that in general the right to the promises is conveyed by the Gospel, "so that wherever the Gospel is preached it gives ground and right to all who hear unto the mercies therein contained, to receive and make use of them as their own."

More particularly, the right flows to us (a) by the appointment of Christ as the covenant of the people; we have a right to Him as our covenant, and not only to Him but to all the benefits He has procured for us; (b) by the Gospel donation, in which the Lord freely gives His Son Jesus Christ, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"; (c) by the Gospel declaration of Christ made sin for us, and of the remission of sins through His blood; (d) by the Gospel offer of Christ and salvation through Him; (e) by the Gospel promise by which all things are freely given to us; (f) by the death of Christ through whom remission of sins is preached; (g) by the sacraments, which are seals and confirmations of God's covenant; and (h) by the declared end and institution of the Gospel, and Christ's coming into the world, which is to save sinners, and that all may believe on Him for this end that they may be saved.

To the second question, How is this right a ground of faith? the answer is that when a man is made to understand that the promises are for him, and that he may and ought to close with them, then all obstacles to his closing with Christ are removed; in other words the promises become a ground of faith.

In the concluding section of this chapter Fraser points out that the freedom of the covenant of grace consists in the fact that it freely confers a right and title to all the privileges contained in the Gospel promises.

To say that faith, he goes on, is the condition of the covenant of grace is neither true nor Scriptural. Faith "is but a mean and instrument whereby we come to possess and enjoy what before we had a title unto .... Faith is not our title but a receiving of our title." Faith justifies, not by being a condition or the condition on which the promise is given to us, for the latter is freely given before faith, but evidentially, by manifesting to us this title; and instrumentally, by uniting us to Christ, and by obtaining justification for us judicially.

There is a clear distinction between the covenant of grace and that of works; in the latter man's obedience is the foundation, while in the former the foundation is what God does and what He promises. The condemnation of those who hear the joyful sound of the Gospel and pay no heed to it comes not from any lack of a proper title to the promises but because they will not take what is theirs.

Here we find a marvellous consolation for every poor, humbled, self-condemned sinner; he has his warrant to receive Christ and to believe the promises.

In this too we see the reality and sincerity of the Gospel offer whereby all its privileges are held out to us and



we are commanded to believe.

We see also the justice of God in condemning reprobates for their sin of unbelief, for they have sufficient ground for laying hold on Christ and taking possession of the promised inheritance.

Lastly, we see exactly what is sealed by the sacraments, particularly baptism; they seal not a conditional promise but the covenant of grace to all who receive it.

The fifth chapter of the Treatise deals with the fourth ground of faith - Christ's death for us, as held forth in II Cor. v. 20, 21. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God: for He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," and Rom. viii. 32-34. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ? .... Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died."

No subject, says Fraser, so much deserves our thoughts and hearts as Christ, and under no consideration is He so lovely or so attractive as in His death. In that death we see clearly the great and infinite evil of sin in its most dreadful effects; in it we also see the mountain from which our help cometh. He now proceeds to speak of it as a ground of faith.

Remission of sins, life, grace, and salvation, he premises, are held out and offered really and particularly to everyone in the visible Church to be received by them by faith, whether they be elect or reprobate. All the mercies of the new covenant are held forth absolutely, and to be received freely by all who hear them. The glad tidings of the Gospel do not depend upon conditions that require to be fulfilled.

The absolute promises of the Gospel were first given to Christ, and through Him to men; He is the blessed channel through which all good is conveyed to men. The privileges of the new covenant were not given to Him "nakedly considered," but as the suffering One, or as the One who was to suffer. They come to men only through His blood; "the blood of Christ is the blessed key which opens all the treasures of divine grace to sinners, which sin and the law had locked on us, and hath given us access to them."

The blood of Christ cannot take away a man's sins otherwise than as it is shed for him in particular; the Gospel must hold out this blood as shed not for men in general but for each man particularly. "There being no other mean of taking away of sin and procuring of salvation but the blood of Christ, the propitiatory sacrifice of Him who offered Himself to God through the eternal Spirit, which sacrifice cannot be conceived to be sufficient or relevant to law to take away the sins of any, except it be offered up for them,

hence ere faith can lay hold on Christ's blood for this end, viz. to be justified and saved thereby, the sinner must of necessity see this sacrifice offered up for him particularly and close with salvation through Christ's blood shed for him ... The blood of Christ, it is true, taketh away all sin, but unless ye say, This blood was shed for me, ye say nothing."

Jesus Christ held forth as crucified not for sinners in general but for each sinner in particular is the ground of certainty to each individual, answering his objections, taking away his fears, and warranting him to come confidently to the throne of grace; the particular application of the death of Christ is essential. "I know," says Fraser, "a naked sufficiency in Christ to save sinners, and the exclusion of none from the merits of Christ's death, is ground enough to make the reprobates inexcusable who would not come to Christ but loved darkness rather than light, and ground of bottoming a weak, infirm, doubting faith, mixed with many fears .... yet without founding your faith on Christ's sufferings for you, you could not have sufficient warrant to build that faith, and warrant that confidence which the Lord not only warrants, but commands us to have."

The obligation upon all to whom the sound of the Gospel comes to believe on the name of Christ does not flow solely or mainly from the sovereignty of God, but is founded on the Gospel declaration of Christ made wisdom for us. This, says Fraser, is the immediate foundation of our faith.

Fraser holds that Christ's dying for us, though not the only ground of faith, is in fact the surest ground of that confidence and full assurance which we are commanded to have. He instances the express testimonies of Scripture, e.g. the Pauline texts which are quoted at the beginning of the chapter.

Remission of sins, grace, and salvation, he maintains, are not to be expected save through the death of Christ; God might have chosen some other way by which these things might become ours but in fact He chose the death of His Son as the channel through which they were to flow. The Gospel offers salvation in no other way.

Again, a man must have a ground for his faith and the only ground he can have, the only thing he can plead when he stands before God's tribunal, is that Christ died in order that he might be justified and saved. There is no other ground sufficient for an assured faith than the satisfaction which is in Christ's death; "there is nothing we can propone as relevant and sufficient to acquit us before the tribunal of God from the charge of the law, but the satisfaction made by Christ."

Finally, Christ's blood is sufficient for all for whom it was shed, and that means for all men.

Christ's death for us being the most solid and firm ground of faith Fraser goes on to maintain that it follows that everyone who is truly and really called to believe on Christ crucified is truly redeemed by Him; to restrict His death to

the elect is wrong.

We see, he says, the wonderful love and goodness of God to sinners in giving them such a strong foundation for faith; such as plead Christ's death have a complete defence against every indictment that may be brought against them. Let us therefore not receive this grace in vain; "the death of Christ, nor the offer thereof in the Gospel, nor all the seals thereof in the sacraments, will not be of any avail unto thee, unless thou receive and apply it, and make use of it."

There is terror and dread here, he continues, to all who slight this great salvation. "If thou die a sligher of this blood nothing else will do thy turn; thy privileges, possessions, duties, nor the calls which thou hast had will not keep thee from the shock of justice, yea, the blood of Christ will not save thee unless thou flee to it, and have thy conscience therewith sprinkled." God acts justly and equitably when He commands men to believe, and also when He condemns them when they do not believe. Reprobates who refuse this salvation are without excuse; they deserve a severe sentence, and have none but themselves to blame.

Again, how mistaken those are who affirm that something more, or something else, than Christ's death is required as a ground of faith, e.g. God's mere will ! "If their meaning be," says Fraser, "that our faith is bottomed only on the mere will of God, and not upon any other rational evidence, then I confess I cannot assent to them; little do these men



think that they herein wrong and straiten the rich and glorious grace of Christ, and as much as in them lies make it of no effect; little think they what unspeakable stumbling-blocks have they hereby laid before the weak that cannot keep their way, and what ground they have given to the enemies of the grace of God to be more hardened in their way, and to open their mouth against heaven more widely, fighting against the Gospel, while these seeming to be with us do secretly furnish our enemies with weapons and authority with which they mortally wound the truths of God."

The present lack of sanctification, Fraser concludes, as also the want of light, strength, and especially consolation, and the increasing power of darkness and corruption, are attributable to the denial of the death of Christ and His satisfaction to divine justice as the defence God allows every humbled, law-broken sinner to lay hold on and to propone as the very bottom and foundation of faith.

It may be objected that Christ's death is not the only sufficient ground for believing laid down in the Gospel. There are, for example, God's goodwill, His gracious nature, His invitations, call and command, and His offer in general - "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." To that the answer is that none of these considerations are sufficient apart from Christ's death to ground faith upon; "if ye separate them from Christ's death for us, then are they

to us no grounds of confidence and assurance, nor can they secure our souls from the fears and accusations of the law and justice."

Again it may be held that many have faith who do not believe that Christ died for all, or whose assurance has not been built upon the belief that He died for them in particular. But if men are uncertain about Christ's dying for them they cannot but be uncertain of their own salvation; if they do not believe that Christ died for them they can have no true justifying faith at all.

Some may say that there is no certain connection between Christ's death and salvation; it does not follow that all for whom He died shall be saved, so how can His death be a ground of assurance of salvation? There is, replies Fraser, a connection between "Christ's death believed in," and salvation; where there is faith a connection does exist, and upon it we can build our assurance.

The final objection with which Fraser deals in this section, and his answer to it are of such importance for the understanding of his theology that they must be given in full. There are some who hold that "if Christ's death be a ground of faith, then as it is the duty of all within the visible Church to believe, so likewise must they believe that Christ died for them seeing their faith is built upon this, or that the death of Christ for them is the foundation of their faith; and if all must believe this, then will it follow undeniably

that Christ died for all within the visible Church, seeing verity is always the object of formal faith." "For answer," Fraser proceeds, "I confess here is a marvellous great strait to which I find the best, godliest and most learned divines driven, and from which I see not how they extricate themselves: the Arminian universal redemption is so justly odious to a pious soul, and a lover of the grace of God; and the conditional redemption a middle path in which some walk, so unreasonable and little satisfactory, that they which love the truth stand at a great distance with anything that looks like universal grace, universal love and the like, and therefore maintain no universal redemption at all: the most of whose arguments against both Arminians and conditionlists I judge unanswerable: yet I find them so gruelled on the other hand with some express testimonies of Scripture, and especially with the call to reprobates to believe, which is universal, that as they are put to some bold glosses upon God's Word to evade its strength, so do the most ingenuous and as I think the most conscientious and learned of them profess sincerely that the difficulties and knots arising from the Lord's call to reprobates to believe on a crucified saviour, who yet according to them never died for any but the elect, are so great that they cannot get overcome and loosed, and therefore profess it a mystery unsearchable; others, it is true, as I truly think, because but superficially acquainted with the controversy, and never deeply wading therein, seem

to make no difficulty therein at all, and therefore answer roundly, according to their several conceptions, to the objection which in the next section we shall examine and consider." As he indicates he deals at greater length in the following section with the whole question.

He begins this section by repeating that there are some who deny that Christ's death and the satisfaction therein offered is the ground of faith, holding that His "naked" power to save sinners, His gracious nature, and so on, together with the promise of salvation upon condition of believing are the only and the sufficient grounds of faith. His answer to this is that Scripture insists that "the death of Christ is indeed the foundation of faith through which and for which only eternal life is believed in and laid hold on." The other considerations are grounds of faith only when taken in conjunction with Christ's death.

There are others who say that faith is an act of the will by which we choose Christ as the mean, way and ordinance of life, or as the chief good, and that it is not necessary, in order to justification, to believe in and rest upon His death. Fraser replies that as he has already pointed out - in the first part of the Treatise - faith is not principally an act of the will, otherwise the covenant of grace would in effect be but another covenant of works; but even if faith were an act of the will, an elective choice of Christ, still men would require to believe in Christ's death for them, for only by

His death for them can they have eternal life. "Jesus Christ only as crucified, and crucified for me or thee, is an only fit mean and sufficient to save me or thee; therefore must faith, granting it be by election, choose Christ as dying for the soul particularly in order to attain eternal life, neither can Christ be the object of our blessedness (as matters now stand) but in as far as He was dead and alive for us."

Others, while agreeing that Christ's death is the ground of faith, restrict it wholly to the elect, and say that none are truly and really called by God in the Gospel to receive life and salvation by Christ but the elect only. Fraser answers that it is impossible to ignore the fact that in Scripture reprobates are called to believe, and that the privileges of the Gospel are offered and held out to them. "I know," he says, "they are not the principal object for whom this call is intended, but the secondary; the elect are indeed in regard of God's intention the primary object of this call, for whose cause the reprobates come to get an offer, but whether they be the primary or secondary object of the call of the Gospel, yet the call really reaches and obliges them to answer it, and is of such force as if (though impossible) they should hearken thereto they should be saved by Christ's merits." Again if we are to hold that only the elect are called then men would hang back until they were certain they were among the elect. Further, according to Fraser, a distinction has to be drawn between the call which



is addressed to reprobates and that which is addressed to the elect; "there is a common resistible call never answered, and by such a call are reprobates called, and there is a special irresistible call, an efficacious call, and this is peculiar to the elect only, and all whom God thus calleth He justifieth, and so the elect are the called of God in a special ~~o~~efficacious manner."

Still others, not differing greatly from the foregoing, hold that not all within the visible Church are called to believe, and that in particular it is the penitent, the weary and the heavy-laden who are called. In reply it is pointed out that Christ called the impenitent to repent; the call is prior to the penitence and independent of it. "I see not," says Fraser, "that the Lord calls us to believe in such a measure and order as if necessarily humiliation were to go in order of time before believing; and though I grant it doth so, and that the poor sinner should only receive his pardon on his knees, as the fittest posture, and that the sinner is oftentimes in such a posture ere his pardon is received, yet I deny it necessary that he be first in order of time on his knees before, but it is sufficient that he receive his pardon in that posture."

There are some who maintain that the elect have a certain inward call which others do not have by which they are made to believe and to know that their sins are pardoned. As he has already shown the insufficiency of this inward testimony Fraser says nothing more about it here.

Others, when faced with the difficulty of believing that an offer of salvation is actually tendered to reprobates through Christ's blood, and a promise made to them that if they believe they will be saved, and that they are bound to believe on Him for salvation, confess that to them the offer of the Gospel is an inconceivable mystery above the reach of man's reason. Fraser regards this as an unworthy way of getting out of the difficulty without really trying to solve it.

Finally, there are those who have still another solution to offer. "Some other," says Fraser, "... being convinced that salvation is offered to reprobates through Christ's blood, and that whatever they be, all are obliged to receive the offer and rest on it for salvation, and yet judging it hard and dangerous to affirm with Arminians that Christ died equally for all, and unreasonable to affirm He died conditionally, do yet find a necessity both from express testimony of Scripture to grant that reprobates are some way interested in Christ's death, and more than devils are, and that however Christ died not for them efficaciously, and as He died for the elect, yet He died sufficiently for them, so as salvation is warrantably offered through His blood, and that this city of refuge as it is set up for them to fly into, so have they legal access to fly thereinto, and is so sufficient for them, that if they believe (which yet I grant they cannot, and will not) they should undoubtedly be saved through Christ's death and sufferings. This method for answering the difficulty

(proposed by Arminians and Papists) I close with as most satisfying, and consonant to the Scriptures, and therefore shall God-willing dilate a little further on this head for the better and fuller clearing of the same."

The paragraph just quoted is one of the clearest statements which Fraser makes of his universalism. He proceeds in the Appendix to this chapter - an Appendix which fills exactly a third of the book - to elaborate the position here taken up. In view of the importance of this Appendix a separate chapter of this thesis is devoted to it. For the present the remainder of the Treatise will be summarised.

The sixth chapter is concerned with the fifth ground of faith - the command of God, which is referred to in I John iii. 23. "This is His commandment that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ," and in John vi. 29. "Jesus said unto them, This is the Word of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."

It is clear from Scripture, says Fraser, that the duty of believing is one which God specially requires of men, and as it is required not of certain select persons only but of all there is no presumption in believing.

What is it that God calls us to believe? Fraser replies that God calls us to believe that of ourselves we are miserable, undone creatures who need a Saviour; that however sad our case may be ~~theirs~~ there is still a remedy for us;

that this remedy is in Christ, and nowhere but in Him; that in Christ crucified there is all we need, and it is for each one of us in particular; that we in particular shall be saved - "by justifying faith I not only believe a Saviour in general, or that He is able to save me, but I believe He will save me"; and finally that while faith on our part is essential salvation comes by the grace and merits of Christ.

What is the nature of the command with which God calls us ? It is a command to believe. It is in God's Word, and is the ground of faith. It makes believing a duty, that which we have to believe being the Gospel-declaration. In the case of the elect, and also in that of some reprobates, the external call is inwardly pressed upon the heart by the working of God's Spirit; "when God draweth a soul by faith to Himself, He speaketh inwardly to the heart of a sinner, not any distinct or contrary things to what is revealed, but the same truths revealed in the Word are made to be understood, considered and heartily embraced, without which we could neither see nor embrace the Gospel." When the Lord effectually deals with a man either by Law or by Gospel, He does so by a particular call, singling him out. It is God's call, not that of a minister. It is wonderful, full of majesty, and efficacious. It is constant, there being no time when it is not our duty to believe. And it is universal - "wherever the Gospel is preached, every soul that hears it, man and woman, rich and poor, old and young, humbled and

unhumbled, are bound to hearken thereto."

It is, Fraser repeats, the duty of all to believe. "I have known some kept in the bonds of unbelief a long time," he says, "because through the subtilty of Satan they did not judge it their duty to believe, in respect they found not themselves thus and thus prepared and humbled." Believing is enjoined on all within the visible Church without exception; even the worst of sinners is called to believe. By obeying this call we honour God more than by anything else we do, for "faith brings a man out of himself altogether, and makes him renounce all merit and excellency, and cast himself merely upon God's grace, than which nothing pleases or glorifies Him more." To refuse to believe is to incur great guilt before God, who is angry, and threatens and punishes, yea, and damns for the sin of unbelief.

Believing is a duty of the utmost importance, Fraser continues, for it is the only means by which we receive life and happiness, or at least the chief means by which we possess and enjoy and are ensured of the privileges of the new covenant. Without it we cannot please God; "Every sacrifice must be salted with this salt." It makes us do whatever has to be done, whatever God requires of us. It is the chief and main duty laid upon us, and in certain circumstances the one and only thing we have to do; "faith will many times keep the field, when all the rest of the graces appear not at all;



faith bides the whole brunt or shock of Satan's war." It is often that to which we are called when we imagine our duty lies elsewhere, e.g. in repentance, mourning, or some other duty. Its importance further appears from the fact that its opposite, unbelief, is clearly the greatest sin, and brings down upon us the greatest wrath. It is a mother grace, the source of other graces, just as unbelief is a mother sin, the parent of other evils. It is the most comfortable and heart-settling grace, bringing the best news at all times to the soul.

How are we to believe in Christ and come to Him? We must come humbly, loathing ourselves and deeply conscious of our unworthiness; "we must receive our pardon from the exalted Prince of Life on our knees." We must come empty, in no way trusting to our own righteousness or merits. We must come mourning and lamenting over our past sins whereby we have grieved and dishonoured the Lord; we must mourn especially the fact that through unbelief we have lived so long at a distance from Him. We must believe confidently in the full assurance of faith. We must come quickly for this is a matter which will admit of no delay. We must come resolved never to depart from Christ again. We must come, not ~~merely~~ recognising the fullness that is in Christ, but determined to eat and drink and receive of Him. We must come on the strength of God's call, which is our warrant for coming. We must come believing on Christ alone. We must believe

heartily with joy and thankfulness, and we must believe constantly and continually. Finally, we must come to Christ for what He is in Himself, and for all His benefits and all the fullness that is in Him, not just for some special benefit we covet.

In this matter of believing Fraser holds that Christians are apt to fall into various errors and mistakes. It is sometimes supposed, for example, that to come to Christ means to escape immediately from all evil and to receive every blessing. This of course is not so. "Mistake not," says Fraser, "though faith brings you to the kingdom of grace, yet doth it not put you in present possession of heaven; though there be a complete relative change as to our state, yet is there not a perfect real change." Not all the benefits of the new covenant necessarily come to us in this life; "our greatest expectations are after this life, and we find the most of the fruits of our faith, prayers, and labours in heaven."

Again, when we come to Christ we ought to look for the greater mercies of the new covenant as well as for the smaller ones, and there is no presumption in so doing. We glorify God most by expecting much. Our fault is that we come to the feast but do not stretch out our hand to take what is on the table for us; we do not put forth our hand to lay hold on Christ; we do not make particular application by faith to ourselves of the things contained in the promises. Our faith

does not go beyond a certain limited number of things, e.g. spiritual mercies, but not temporal gifts. "Many," says Fraser, "can trust God for their soul, that dare not trust Him for their bodily wants, for their bread."

Further, we live more by sense than by faith, we are more ready to ground our faith on our inward feelings than on the Word of God; "our feelings should be grounded on our faith, and not our faith on our feeling." Often our faith is not built purely and only on the grace of Christ; we seek other props for it; "Christ will have no partners, He will either do it alone or not at all." At the same time, and in addition to our faith, we must make use of the means God has appointed for the accomplishment of the promises; He indeed promises absolutely but His gifts are given and conveyed in certain ways which we must observe.

Lastly, we satisfy ourselves with weak hopes, lacking the full assurance we ought to have. And we forget that a single act of faith is not enough; there is a life of faith to be lived.

A man may say that he is so sinful and vile that he cannot believe that God calls him to receive such great mercies. The Lord calls you, says Fraser, not because of any goodness in you, but in order that He may show the riches of His grace; "therefore the more vile and unworthy thou be on whom this favour is conferred, the fitter subject to shew grace upon, and to manifest His mercy and goodness to."

But I do not have the qualifications with which I am desired to come ! I do not mourn, and loathe myself as I ought ! Still it is your duty to come. "Come to the Lord Jesus for all thou wantest; faith fetches all from Christ, who is exalted .... not only to give remission to the penitent, but to give repentance to the impenitent, who therefore ought to come to the Lord Jesus for this."

Once I felt the Lord dealing with me, striving with my heart, knocking at the door, but I no longer hear His call ! Though you cannot hear Him still it is your duty to come; His command still confronts you in His written Word, and that is His call to you.

But believing is a work wrought by the operation of God ! If we believe before the Lord's power come faith will be but a work of our own spinning ! "I grant thou canst not believe till the Lord enable thee," Fraser replies, "for He is 'the author and finisher of our faith'; but though without the arm of the Lord ye cannot believe, yet is believing your duty, and you ought to do so, in respect there is sufficient objective ground and grace revealed, though there be not sufficient subjective grace to make and cause you to believe; sufficient objective grace makes the sinner inexcusable, and make it his duty to believe though he want subjective grace, through the want of which he cannot believe, the reason is, because your impotency or want of subjective grace is not only your misery but your sin, and ye ought to have it, presupposing

sufficient objective grace; but it is not my duty to have sufficient objective grace, and therefore are not they who want these means condemned."

I am not humbled, my heart is hard and insensible of sin ! All the more reason why you should come to Christ for you have real need of Him.

I do not really love or prize Christ ! You will never really prize Him as you ought till you have made Him yours by faith. "Property raises estimation."

I fear to presume ! To obey God's call and to glorify Him is no presumption but plain duty. A man presumes only when he comes without warrant, or when he builds his faith on something in himself, or when he comes to Christ only for pardon for past sins, and not for power to resist sin in the future.

It is therefore the duty of all who hear the Gospel, Fraser sums up, to come and partake of the water of life freely. To refuse to do so is a great transgression, and "the condemning sin." Strive therefore to believe; look to all your graces, but especially to this; mourn for every sin, but especially for your unbelief. Be thankful to God for His great grace in stooping so low to mind and call you when you deserved nothing but hell.

The seventh chapter deals with the sixth and last ground of faith - Christ's gracious promise to believers, John vi. 37.



"And him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out."

According to Fraser, these words show that there is a necessary connection between faith and salvation; those who come to Christ shall undoubtedly be saved.

The truth of this word of encouragement is seen in the faithfulness of the God who has made in the promise; in the sufficiency of Christ's merits which faith apprehends; in Christ's practice in never sending empty away any distressed sinner who came to Him; and finally in the stability of election which is the fountain and foundation of all mercy - "all these and these only whom He hath predestinated hath He called and maketh believe, and those whom He calleth He certainly justifieth."

But, some one may say, many come to Christ and are rejected ! True, replies Fraser, for there are those who come to Him hypocritically seeking not Him but the loaves He can give. "Never one came sincerely to Christ from the sense of God's command, for Himself and all His benefits, that ever was sent empty away, but was helped soon or late."

Another may say, I have come to Christ for life and salvation, and yet have not found myself any better ! May it not be, asks Fraser, that God did you good though you were not sensible of it ? In any case keep on believing in Him and looking to Him; have patience, and you will inherit the promises. Know that in Him there are those things which you need though you may not as yet have received them. It is

wrong to suppose that the moment we come to Christ all evil disappears, and there is no more sin. Be sure that if you come to Christ He will not cast you out, but will certainly own you at the last day. If your faith has so far been fruitless you yourself are most probably to blame - have you neglected duties such as prayer and watchfulness ? Have you stretched out your hand to receive and take to yourself what Christ offers ? Have you too hastily given way to discouragement ?

But I cannot do what the Lord requires of me ! I do not walk as a believer ought to walk, and how then can I expect the promises of faith ? The real question is, Are you content to receive the Lord Jesus wholly to be your king ? Are you willing to be made clean ? If you are He will cleanse you and help you to do your duty.

The final chapter in the Treatise deals with the nature of faith as illustrated by several Scripture metaphors and notions.

(1) In Heb. xi. 1. faith is called the evidence of things not seen. This means, says Fraser, that faith is the Christian's magna charta, his great "evident" for heaven. Just as the owners of lands or houses have papers or writs - called "evidents" - by which these properties are conveyed to them so "a Christian, an heir of the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, hath his rights and "evidents" thereof, which

are nothing else but the promises of the Gospel." To sanctified and renewed persons who believe the universal proposition, "all that are called, sanctified, or believe, shall be saved," the promises are clear evidence for they plainly see their own names in them. In the case of blind, naked, miserable sinners these absolute promises, made expressly to them, are their title, claim and "evident" for all they require.

Faith lays hold of these absolute and indefinite promises and applies them particularly to the individual soul, and so they become "seen evidents." It takes Christ, heaven, happiness, remission of sins, and the other privileges of the new covenant - unseen by the eye of reason or sense, either in their proportions, their due worth or their propriety - and makes them seen, discovering their worth and excellency. "Faith applies particularly in an echoing way whatever the Law and Gospel saith in general." By the light and eye of faith we see those things which before were hid, in particular the mercy, power, and goodness of God, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) In the Old Testament faith is spoken of as a turning to the Lord, and in the New Testament as a coming to Christ (cf. Heb. vii. 25, Matt. xi. 28, and John vii. 37).

These expressions, which both mean the same thing, says Fraser, imply that there is a real distance between God and man; once intimate and dear friends, living in sweet fellow-

ship with one another, they are now separated by sin. It is also clear from these expressions that there are certain things a man must forsake, and others he must turn to; on the one hand he must forsake sin, Satan, self, and the world: on the other, he must turn to God as revealed in Christ.

There is a turning of God to man, and of man to God.

"Christ comes to man, and man being drawn by the almighty power of God doth hence come to God; those who shunned and forsook one another, are now by Jesus Christ the Mediator and Days-man, the centre in which the diverse lines unite, made to meet."

The Christ to whom we are to turn is the Christ who promises and declares peace on earth, and remission of sins through His blood, and who brings life and immortality to light in His covenant of grace. This Christ is the proper object of faith. As He comes to us, not in His bodily presence but by His Spirit, Word, and ordinances, so we turn to Him, not by ascending bodily into heaven where He now is, but by the motions of our souls and affections towards Him.

Faith is the turning of the soul in an act not primarily of fear or of love but of belief, though both fear and love come with and attend faith in its motion to Christ. "Christ comes to us in His Word and gracious promise, which the soul first sees to be true in order of nature, ere it sees it to be good." The end of faith is not a naked belief in Christ and His promises, but a practical belief which brings a man

to Christ to be saved by Him.

(3) Faith is also spoken of as a receiving of Christ (John i. 12), and a taking of the water of life (Rev. xxi. 17). Here again, according to Fraser, the expressions mean the same thing. This receiving of Christ implies that the soul and heart accept His<sup>m</sup> as He is held forth in His Word, in which aspect alone is He the proper object of faith. We receive Him by the hearing of the ear; we must first actually "hear tell" of Him. We also receive Him when we understand, believe and assent to the Gospel; when we apply it particularly to ourselves; when we clasp Him with the arms of love and affection; and when we close with the promises of salvation which we find in Him.

(4) Faith is further spoken of as an opening of the door (cf. Ps. xxiv. 7, 9, and Rev. iii. 20). By nature the heart of man is shut against Christ; both the door of the understanding and that of the will are shut against Him. The truth of the Gospel is the key which opens the first, and the worth and excellency of the things promised in it that which opens the second. By the understanding men see, believe, and apprehend Christ as a Saviour sufficient to save them; by the will they welcome Him into their souls.

(5) Again, faith is referred to as a looking to the Lord Jesus (Isa. xlv. 22). As the Israelites, bitten by the serpents, were ordered to look for healing to the



brazen serpent held up by Moses so men bitten, stung, and tormented with the venom of sin must look up to Christ for remedy. He is held up for those who are miserable and sin-tormented, for it is only such who can or will look up to Him. Their help is in Him, for He is sealed and appointed by God for the salvation and relief of sinners, and there is virtue in Him to quicken, cleanse, comfort and strengthen the soul. Faith is the means which God has appointed whereby this virtue comes down to men. The Christ to whom they must look is the suffering and dying Christ, the Christ who is lifted up on the Cross to satisfy divine justice for the sins of the world.

Faith takes into consideration the design and end for which Christ died - "to give life to as many as believe on Him." The believer looks up to Him not as a Saviour in general but as a Saviour designed, appointed and instituted by God to save him in particular. He looks up to Him expecting to receive salvation and life, and such looking to Christ justifies him because it is the means appointed by God for this very purpose.

(6) Faith again is spoken of as eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God (John vi. 50-58).

Just as there is a natural, corporal bread by which our bodies are nourished so there is a spiritual food, a heavenly bread which gives and nourishes the spiritual life. The life nourished by this bread is one of justification, consolation, sanctification and glory.

The Lord Jesus, the God-man given by the Father to die for sinners, is this bread which gives life to the world. It is not in the Law nor in ordinances to give this life but only in Jesus, the eternal Son of God, the Christ-man crucified, given, declared, and held forth in the Gospel as the Saviour of sinners.

Faith is the means whereby we partake of this spiritual food. By a particular application faith takes, handles, and receives it, and so the soul is nourished. By it the virtue and life which are in Christ become the possession of sinners.

This spiritual life communicated by faith is the best of all lives. It is the life of the soul, and the soul is to be ranked above the body; it is the life of God, and by it we converse with God, Christ, and the spirits of just men made perfect; it is a life which is secure in Christ, hid with Him in God; it is an everlasting life, enduring for ever; and it is a perfect life, unmixed with death or sorrow.

(7) Faith is sometimes spoken of as a laying hold of the Lord's strength and covenant (Isa. xxvii. 5, and lvi. 4).

God is in no sense man's debtor. Long ago and of His own free will, being under no compulsion, He entered into a covenant with men, promising them happiness upon condition of perfect obedience. But this covenant of works they failed to keep; and so He came to them once more, this time with a covenant of grace, offering Himself freely in the

Gospel. So it is now for poor, indigent sinners to lay hold of Him, and to "take an holy advantage of Him." Faith is this laying hold of God in His new covenant.

(8) Other expressions used to describe faith include trusting on God, resting on the Lord, hungering after Christ, and marrying Christ.

Trusting on the Lord, as Fraser points out, is the term commonly used in the Old Testament to describe faith, and corresponds to the expression, "believing on the Lord," which the New Testament uses. It refers to "the soul's outgoing to Christ for salvation by faith."

Resting on the Lord is rather a fruit of faith than faith itself. Hungering after Christ likewise is rather a disposition to faith than actual faith. Marrying Christ is indeed an expression by which faith itself is held out to us, for in faith something akin to that which takes place in marriage does happen; Christ becomes ours, and we and all our sins become His, and so we are justified.

The Treatise proper ends here but there is a postscript of considerable interest. As however it applies more to Fraser's theory of universal redemption, as elaborated in the Appendix to which the next chapter of this Thesis is devoted, I propose to give it at the end of that chapter.

As will have become obvious in the course of the above

very rapid survey of a lengthy and weighty Treatise there is here, as in all Fraser's works, a great deal of repetition. Whole arguments are given sometimes twice, sometimes oftener, and as a rule in almost identical terms. There is also a very considerable amount of contradiction and inconsistency, and not only of a verbal kind. Here and there Fraser appears to advance arguments which are directly contrary not only to what he maintains in some of his earlier works but also to some of the positions taken up in the opening chapters of this same work.

But these things do not affect his main argument nor do they detract from the value of a really great exposition of the Scriptural doctrine of faith; and however much we may differ from him in some of the positions he takes up, and in some of the conclusions to which he comes, we can indeed call his Treatise a great exposition. The blemishes which one finds in it are, in part at least, only those which are to be expected in a work so voluminous and written under the difficulties with which the author had to contend when he was engaged upon it. A prison cell is not the most ideal study-room, nor does it lend itself to accuracy and precision of exposition.

## C H A P T E R   X V

### THE FAITH TREATISES

#### (d) THE APPENDIX CONCERNING THE OBJECT OF CHRIST'S DEATH

The Appendix to chapter five of the Second Faith Treatise is entitled "An Appendix Concerning the Object of Christ's Death," and extends to 112 out of the 336 pages in the book, i.e. exactly one third of the whole. From one point of view it is by far the most important of all Fraser's works as it is the only part that has had any appreciable effect upon the course of religious thought in Scotland. Elsewhere in his writings Fraser is more or less orthodox, and as a rule ultra-conservative, though his particular theory of universal redemption, as we have seen, does appear more or less clearly in practically all his books. But in this Appendix he elaborates that theory, and so makes a decided break with ultra-Calvinism, though it has to be noted that he is at pains to deny that he has any intention of forming a school of thought opposed to the Calvinistic divines to whom he so frequently acknowledges his debt.

It will be remembered that in the concluding paragraph of chapter five of the Second Treatise he referred to a method



of solving the difficulty which he and others had found in accepting the commonly held ideas of salvation, the difficulty, namely, of finding a middle way between the Arminian theory that Christ died equally for all, and the opposite theory that reprobates have no interest whatsoever in His death. Fraser's own theory, which he believes solves the difficulty, and is most satisfying and consonant with Scripture, is that "reprobates are some way interested in Christ's death, and more than devils are, and that however Christ died not for them efficaciously and as He died for the elect, yet He died sufficiently for them, so as salvation is warrantably offered through His blood, and that this city of refuge as it is set up for them to fly into, so have they legal access to fly thereinto, and is so sufficient for them, that if they should believe (which yet I grant they cannot, and will not) they should undoubtedly be saved through Christ's death and sufferings." In the Appendix he elaborates this theory, this reconciling theory as he fondly imagined it to be.

He begins by saying that there are few heads of divinity of greater importance, or more difficult to make plain, than the object of Christ's death. Theologians have always debated the point with great heat and fervour, and he is reluctant to take part in the controversy, save for one consideration: he desires "to compose and shew an agreeance and way of accommodation," rather than "by pathing out any new road, to add fuel to the fire." It is important to

note that he disclaims any desire to advance a new theory; his purpose is to offer a middle way which he hopes will be found acceptable by all. In this, as the sequel will show, he was destined to suffer disappointment, for his via media commended itself to but few in the Scottish Church, and led not to a greater measure of agreement but to further controversy.

(1) At the outset he refers to the various opinions which have commonly been held with regard to the object and extent of Christ's death. Some have restricted its purpose to the elect only, and have excluded all the rest of the world from any share or interest in it or benefit from it. Others have affirmed that all men without exception have an equal interest in it. Some have held that all the sins of reprobates are satisfied for, save their final unbelief, and that Christ purchased all benefits for them, with the exception of saving faith. Others have maintained that Christ died to gain a possibility of salvation for all, and effectually to save the elect only. Still others have said that He died sufficiently for all, but efficaciously only for the elect.

Among the many theories which have been advanced Fraser selects five as being the most important, and these he proceeds to examine in detail. First, there is the opinion held by Papists and Arminians that Christ died equally for all, both elect and reprobate; that God by the death of His Son intended salvation for all, those who eventually perish as well as those who in the end are saved; that by that death

there was procured for all both sufficient objective grace and sufficient subjective grace for salvation; and finally that whether a man is saved or lost depends in the last resort on himself. "This opinion," says Fraser, "is so contrary to Scripture and betrays such an enmity to the grace of God, and is so friendly to proud corrupt nature, and lays so great a stress upon and commits so great a trust to free-will, that it is justly scarred at, and gainsaid by all such as love our Lord Jesus and the Gospel of His grace, and so born down with the weight and multitude of arguments, that it can hardly stand on its feet, and which afterwards I shall refute, and answer the chief arguments whereupon this universal redemption is built." Clearly it is only in a very limited sense that Fraser can be charged with being an Arminian !

The second opinion with which he deals is that Christ died only for the elect, and not at all for reprobates; that all for whom He died shall believe, be effectually called, justified, and glorified; and that as God from all eternity had a peculiar love and goodwill to the latter, so He manifested the same in the greatest expression of His love, His sending His Son to die for them, as He did not for others. This, says Fraser, is the position taken up by the Confession of Faith; he refers the reader to Chapter viii, Article 6. This would seem to be a misprint for Chapter iii, Article 6, which reads: "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so

hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."

Fraser agrees that this opinion is "sound and orthodox as to the substance thereof" though he takes exception to the way in which some of its supporters have expressed it. While he himself, like those who hold this opinion, believes in a special redemption in which none but the elect share yet in order that what he has hereafter to say may not seem to contradict this opinion or the learned divines who hold it he takes leave to make certain observation. a. While he is convinced that Christ died efficaciously only for the elect, he cannot agree with some of the arguments which have been used to prove this. b. He cannot assent to some of the conclusions which have been drawn from this doctrine. c. He cannot accept nor see the force of some of the arguments used by those who hold the doctrine of particular redemption as opposed to that of universal redemption; while agreeing with them on most points yet in dealing with Arminian arguments for universal redemption he prefers to adopt a line different from that which they take.



The third opinion is that of those who maintain a conditional redemption for all; those who walk in a middle way between universal redemption on the one hand, and on the other particular redemption. These people believe that "Christ made all Adam's posterity salvageable upon Gospel terms, having purchased remission of sins and all saving benefits upon condition of believing." This opinion, says Fraser, may be held in two ways: first, that Christ did not die absolutely for any, but conditionally upon their believing; secondly, that He died absolutely for all, but the sinner does not enjoy the benefit of His death unless or until he believes. Taken in the first sense Fraser regards this theory as unreasonable as the Arminian theory is in his view wicked. In the second sense he holds that the theory is improperly called "conditional."

The fourth opinion is that Christ died sufficiently for all, and efficaciously only for the elect. Fraser points out that to understand what is here meant we must try to discover what "sufficiently" connotes. It may, he says, refer to what he calls sufficientia nuda, "a naked material sufficiency," or sufficientia ordinata, "an ordinate formal sufficiency." In the first sense what is meant is that Christ's death is extensive enough to redeem the whole of mankind, if it had been His pleasure to do so. But the question still remains, Did Christ really die for all? In the second sense what is intended is that Christ's death is sufficient to save all for



whom it was intended, and that means that this opinion does not differ materially from that held by those who maintain that Christ died only for the elect.

The fifth opinion is that there is a twofold redemption, one special, and the other common. Cf. I Tim. iv. 10. "We trust in the living God who is the Saviour of all, especially of those who believe." As all men partake of God's common gifts and common deliverances so there is a common redemption in which all share. But as there are special gifts and special deliverances in which only ~~have~~ a few share so there is a special redemption which is for none but the elect.

Fraser concludes this section of the Appendix by pointing out that these five theories which he has outlined may really be reduced to two. On the one hand there is the orthodox position which is that redemption is limited and particular; and on the other, the position taken up by Papists, Quakers, and Arminians, according to which there is a universal redemption. Once more he insists that his sympathies are with those who hold the orthodox position, though he hopes to be able to add something of value to what they maintain.

(2) In the second section of the Appendix Fraser deals with certain assertions relative to the death of Christ which he regards as generally accepted. But first he lays down one or two axioms: The Lord Jesus Christ, the second Person of the blessed Trinity, is the only Saviour of sinners, there

being no other name given by which any can be saved; Christ came to save sinners, and He does so by suffering for them; His death and sufferings are the channel through which salvation necessarily flows; and His blood is sufficient to save only those for whom it was shed, and each who comes to Him for salvation must "eye and look to Christ as crucified for him ere he can expect salvation through His blood." Now for the assertions for which he expects general agreement.

a. God has a special love for His elect in which repro-bates have no share; any benefits, privileges or mercies they enjoy do not proceed from this special love.

b. By His death Christ did not purchase universal subjective grace to give it absolutely to all whereby they might, if they had the will, make use of the means of grace for salvation. Had He done so it would have meant that man's free-will would become the determining factor in his happiness or eternal misery; and that would give him occasion to glory, and would be "cross to the great design of the Gospel, which is to humble man."

c. There is not universal objective grace given to all, for not all have sufficient revelation of the means and way of salvation; they do not have that knowledge of God and His will which is essential for salvation. But all within the visible Church, those who hear the Gospel and to whom the oracles of God are committed, have sufficient objective grace. In other words, they have all that is necessary of an objective

character for salvation though they may not have sufficient subjective grace. Only the elect have sufficient grace of both kinds; and in their case grace is not only sufficient but also efficacious and irresistible.

d. Christ did not die in the same manner for both elect and reprobate; there is a special redemption for the former, and in this the latter have no share.

e. As Christ by His death ~~apd~~ a proper and real satisfaction to divine justice so did He die absolutely, not conditionally, for all those for whom He died.

f. Christ died for all the sins of those persons for whom He died; for sins against the Gospel as well as sins against the Law, and for original sin as well as for actual sins.

g. He died for none but those for whom God purposed that He should die; the satisfaction He made to divine justice is bounded and ordered by God's absolute decree.

h. By one indivisible, infinite ransom He sanctified His elect for ever.

i. There is therefore but one covenant of grace or redemption; one redemption, not two, relating to both elect and reprobate, though this is not to be held as contradicting the thought of a special redemption in which only the elect share.

j. Even supposing Christ died only for the elect, and in no sense whatsoever for reprobates, still in view of the fact that here and now no one can say who is elect and who is not

all are allowed to hope that they are among the elect. Only so can salvation be offered to all, and only so can reprobates be held inexcusable for their rejection of Christ.

k. If Christ died only for the elect there could be no general offer of salvation through His blood; it is only when He is regarded as dying for all and every one that there can be a free offer of salvation, or that the sin of unbelief can be called inexcusable.

l. Whether all men, or the elect only, have an interest in Christ's death, still the offer of salvation must be made only in the way God allows and commands in His Word, namely, to all who realise their need and insufficiency.

m. Men, elect or reprobate, have more interest in Christ's death than devils.

n. Remission of sins through the blood of Christ is offered not to the elect only but to all who hear the Gospel, and to all the promise is made that if they believe they shall be saved.

o. All who reject the Gospel offer of salvation are guilty of the blood of Christ, and crucify Him afresh in that they make His death fruitless.

p. By His death, from which benefits flow even to reprobates, Christ has put the whole world in His debt.

q. His death is in every way sufficient to save all men. It is a fit, valid, and sufficient defence at law to take away indictment founded upon man's breach of the covenant of works,

and to pass a righteous sentence of absolution on all who shall plead the same.

Four conclusions are now briefly stated :-

a. By His death Christ acquired a right of purchase over all men, and so reprobates are said to be bought by Him.

b. There is no conditional redemption either of elect or of reprobate; there is only absolute redemption.

c. Though He is in a special manner Saviour of the elect, and though He died for them in a sense in which He did not die for others, yet Christ died sufficiently for all, and His death extends in a common way to all within the visible Church who have some common interest therein and are not excluded as devils are.

d. The adequate object of redemption is neither the elect nor the reprobate, by themselves, but all mankind.

These four conclusions, says Fraser, are not altogether obscurely hinted at in that "massy" Scripture, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ...." There, he maintains, God's love is referred to as absolute and depending on no condition, the world is spoken of as the object of that love, all men are said to have an interest in it whether in the end they are to be saved or lost. and Christ's death is shown to be in a special sense for the elect who shall believe.

(3) Fraser is careful to define what he means when he says that redemption is absolute. He means that Christ has paid the full price; those redeemed have nothing to pay for



He has discharged their debt in full. He does not mean that the efficacy of Christ's death is absolute; the benefits purchased by it are made effectual only to such as believe.

This, however, he insists, is not to say the same thing as those who maintain that redemption itself is conditional, for,

a. To say that Christ redeemed reprobates upon condition of their believing is in effect to say that He did not redeem them at all, for reprobates cannot believe;

b. To say that God sent His Son to shed His blood upon a condition which He knows never shall be performed is derogatory to His wisdom; "that a rational agent should do an action for a certain end, which He knows shall never be, is really and in effect to say he never intended such an end, and that his action was unreasonable";

c. To hold a conditional redemption does not get over the difficulty which those who believe in it seek to surmount, namely, to clear the Gospel from the charge of double-dealing; conditional redemption is in no sense a surer foundation for faith or consolation than the doctrine of absolute particular redemption; can we think of God offering salvation to reprobates upon condition of believing when Christ's blood was never really shed for them ?;

d. To hold a conditional redemption does not afford any solid ground for believing; to say to a sinner that Christ died for him, and satisfied divine justice for him, upon condition of his believing, is no answer to his question, Upon what can

I base my faith ?;

e. A thing is either true or false in itself quite apart from whether we believe it or not; our believing does not make it one thing or the other; to say that Christ died for all, including reprobates, is <sup>either</sup> ~~either~~ true or false absolutely and quite apart from what reprobates, or any others, think of it;

f. Finally, Scripture never speaks of redemption in any conditional sense but always absolutely. John iii. 16., upon which the theory of conditional redemption is sometimes based, says that Christ was given to the world, not conditionally but absolutely. It is the promise of life which is conditional; "the most absolute gifts or dispositions are of avail only to the receivers. Christ satisfied justice absolutely, and yet He satisfied only so as all these who believe on Him should have life."

Some may object that all this is making salvation too cheap and easy. If redemption is to be had on the ~~easy~~ condition of believing is not the whole idea of salvation debased ? But is believing as easy as all that ? In a sense faith is just as impossible, as far as men are concerned, as that perfect obedience which they never could render. "Ten thousand pounds," says Fraser, "is a less sum than ten thousand talents, but they are both alike to a poor beggar who cannot command sixpence, and were he to be hanged for want of ten thousand talents, his heart would be little lightened though a friend should assure him that he had gotten his life upon condition of paying ten thousand

pounds only." But here too God has come to man's aid, for Christ by His death has purchased for him not only salvation upon the condition of believing but also grace by which he can fulfil that condition.

(4) In what sense can it be said that Christ died for all mankind, especially those in the visible Church ? Scripture, says Fraser, so often assures us that He died for all that we require to discover what this means.

a. He died, Fraser replies, in a real sense for all those for whom in Scripture He is said to have died. We must maintain this in opposition both to Socinians and others like them who hold the theory of a metaphorical ransom, and deny that Christ gave a real satisfaction, and also to those who hold that the expression does not cover the case of reprobates.

b. When Christ is said to have tasted death for every man this is absolutely said and really meant. What He purchased was absolutely purchased.

c. It is by the will of God that Christ's death is accepted as satisfaction for the sins of men. By the same will it is decreed that it is effectual only in the case of such as believe, and that those who despise and reject it shall perish. In its effects and outgoings it is bounded and ordered by the divine, unsearchable and most holy will of God.

d. Christ's death is sufficient to be a satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. "In this sense," says Fraser,

"He died for reprobates, that is, if He had pleased He was able to save them, so as their perishing did not proceed from any defect or want that was in the death of Christ."

e. To say that there are some of Adam's posterity who have no more interest in Christ's death than devils have is, says Fraser, "that which of all things I shall (I think) be hardlied ever induced to believe or close with, and is in effect above the reach of my poor judgment to conceive." "Surely," he continues, "there is a relation founded on the specifical unity of that human nature which Christ did assume, to which every individual of that kind may challenge some relation."

f. Christ's death is sufficient to save reprobates by an ordinary sufficiency. Fraser explains that by this he means that "the death of Christ is so by law .... constitute and appointed for reprobates or for all within the visible Church as it is applicable by them for salvation, justice being thereby fundamentally satisfied."

g. Christ so far died for all within the visible Church that life and all the benefits of the new covenant can be offered to all, including reprobates, though God knows that reprobates will never embrace the offer of the Gospel.

h. Christ so far died for reprobates that by their rejection of the Gospel offer they become guilty of the blood of the Son of God, and of crucifying Him afresh.

i. Christ so far died for reprobates that they do thereby

enjoy many privileges, gifts, and mercies which otherwise they would never have had.

j. Christ so far died for both elect and reprobate that He now has not only a right of conquest over them but also the right, won by purchase, to do with them as He pleases, and to employ them as He chooses.

k. Christ died primarily for the elect, and only secondarily and consequentially for the reprobate. The latter are the object of a common, as distinct from a special, redemption. "Christ died for all, that by His death holden out for all He might save the elect." But in Fraser's view the important thing is that there is a sense in which it is right to hold that Christ died for all men, including the reprobate.

(5) If it is the case, as Fraser maintains, that Christ really died in some measure for all within the visible Church it follows that all receive some blessing or privilege from His death. What is this blessing or privilege ?

Let us think, says Fraser, of the state in which Christ found mankind. "Christ died for them not as they were righteous; He found them not in a state of innocence, but in rebellion against the Lord; when He passed by them they were in their blood; they had violated a just, holy and righteous law, they were obliged to undergo the punishment of eternal condemnation, denounced God's rebels, and forfeited and cast in the prison, where Satan is the jailer, where their lusts



like chains bind them night and day, that they cannot stir, being led captive at the will of the Prince of the Air. This is the howling wilderness where we are found in by the Lord."

The Law, Fraser proceeds, must be satisfied in two respects; we must pay the debt which brought us under its sentence; we must also go through those formalities which are required before we can be freed from its execution. When a man is in prison for debt he must do two things before he can be set free: pay the debt, and apply to have the sentence against him removed; and the second of these is as important as the first: "the reason is, as he was formally, solemnly, by intervention of law-instituted formalities cast and put in prison (for his being simply a debtor did not incarcerate him) so must this Law, being fundamentally satisfied, be likewise formally satisfied; as he was formally cast in prison, so must he be formally relieved and come out."

According to Fraser, something similar must take place before a sinner can find satisfaction. Two things stand in the way of the sinner's happiness, and make his salvation impossible: the sentence of the Law, and his own unbelief. The first of these is removed by the death of Christ, but until his unbelief is removed the sinner remains a prisoner with the wrath of God over him and the chains of sin around him.

The removal of the sentence of the Law is the blessing and privilege which all receive from Christ's death. "The

Law is fundamentally satisfied, so as there is no objective impossibility arising from the covenant of works, and want of satisfaction to justice, in the way of the sinner's salvation and deliverance." But the barrier of unbelief has still to be removed, and it is because in some cases this barrier is never removed that certain individuals perish. "Now, though none but the elect shall be saved and make use of these things, yet have all right thereunto, this is that price which is in the fool's hand to buy wisdom; the grace of God which so many receive in vain. The Reprobate in the visible Church, though the Law be fundamentally satisfied, and no legal bar of that nature in their way to heaven, being left to themselves and the power of unbelief, and destitute of the efficacious inbeing of the Holy Spirit, though they have a price in their hands, yet neither do nor can buy wisdom, and so, though in respect of the want of subjective grace, their salvation is impossible, yet not in respect of the want of <sup>objective</sup> ~~subjective~~ grace, or sufficient Law-access to propone relevant defences, and reasons of reduction of the sentence of the Law; and hence Christ is called 'the Saviour of all men, but especially of those that believe.'"

(6) Fraser returns to his point that even reprobates have some interest in Christ's death. He adduces five special arguments in support of his contention.

First, he holds that Scripture clearly and in various ways teaches this, e.g. "He is the propitiation for our sins,

and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world"; "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all"; "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Scripture, he says, uses the same expression when it speaks of Christ dying for all as it does when it says that all men are created by God, and that all shall die and rise again. There is no Scripture which denies that Christ died for all, and none which says that there are some who have no interest in His death. Scripture declares plainly that Christ died for the whole world. In the case of election it is not said that God elected the whole world or sanctified every man; it is quite clear that according to Scripture "redemption hath a larger sphere than election hath, and therefore the Scriptures contract election in words of speciality only, while they open and dilate redemption in emphatical generalities." "These considerations," says Fraser, "move me to think that there may be a general common redemption of all mankind."

Again, only by holding a universal redemption can the Gospel offer be justified. "If Christ hath not in some sense really died for all within the visible Church, how can there be an offer of salvation holden out and declared to them through Christ's blood?" If Christ's blood is not in any sense shed for reprobates then the offer of salvation becomes meaningless; if there is a class of men to whom Christ cannot give salvation the Gospel offer loses its reality.

Further, only upon terms of universal redemption is there a sure ground for faith and consolation. Apart from the thought of Christ's blood shed for all there is no sure ground; neither the naked, absolute sufficiency of Christ, nor the gracious, merciful nature of God, nor the promise of salvation, nor the command of God, nor any act<sup>of</sup> choice of Christ by us is enough. Only the doctrine of the universal extent of Christ's death yields clear ground and infallible evidence for a sure faith; nothing else is sufficient to remove all doubts and fill the heart with joy. We shall not all be saved, but the fact remains, says Fraser, that Christ died for us all, and that is the only basis for a sure faith.

Once more, if Christ did not die for reprobates as well as for the rest of mankind how can they be said to have a hand in His death, or to be guilty of His blood? If they have never had any interest in His death is it right to speak of it as being in vain as far as they are concerned? Only the fact that reprobates do have an interest in Christ's death justifies us in holding that their rejection of Christ is inexcusable.

Finally, this belief adds to the glory of Christ. Where sin abounds His grace is shown to abound much more; His power is magnified, sin being conquered in all its subjects; and His dominion is extended, for He has bought the whole world for Himself.

(7) Fraser has other arguments to offer in support of his theory of a sufficient universal satisfaction for reprobates. For example, Paul says "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." If all men are called to believe in a ~~re~~reconciliation based on the ground that God has made Christ sin for us it follows that the ground upon which the command is universally pressed must equally apply to all, i.e. Christ must have died for all. Paul is not referring to the elect world alone when he says that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself"; he is speaking of the whole world, the world without reservation of any kind. Fraser, however, is careful to point out that "it was not God's purpose, aim, and end that all and every one should be justified, nor doth the Scripture affirm it .... God never purposed that all should believe; therefore it was never His end."

It has already been shown, Fraser continues, that all within the visible Church have an interest in the promises of the new covenant; it naturally follows that they must have an interest in Christ's death as well, for it is the channel through which all the promises flow. "It is Christ's death that gave His testament strength to subsist in law; none therefore have right to the promises but such as have right to and interest in Christ's death; and if all within the



visible Church have interest in the promises, then have they interest in Christ's death, through which and from which all these promises do flow." Of the promises Fraser says later on, "the reprobates are not, as to effect, the persons to whom they shall be accomplished."

Again, if, as is the case, all within the visible Church are baptized into the death of Christ, then all have an interest in His death. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" "By baptism," says Fraser, "we are as it were infeft in Christ's death."

Further, it is beyond dispute, he holds, that Christ came to die for men as lost sinners in Adam, not for elect sinners only, but for all sinners. "The whole need not a physician." "Christ died and came to save sinners," Fraser says, "as they were stated by the fall of Adam, but they were by the first Adam's fall stated as sinners and lost, therefore Christ died for mankind as they were lost, and sinners and condemned."

It is also a fact that some reprobates enjoy certain benefits which come to them from Christ as mediator. Judas, for example, received the gift of apostleship in Christ's Church. But as all the benefits which flow from Christ as mediator were purchased by His death it follows that reprobates do have an interest in that death. It is not sufficient to say that any benefits reprobates enjoy come to them for the

elects' sake, for had He so desired God could have excluded them from participation in these benefits even though their lot was cast among the elect. Their participation in the benefits is not accidental but by the will of God.

Again, the object of faith, that which men are called to believe, is Christ crucified for them; all are commanded to look to Him as crucified, which can only mean that in some sense He died for all, and also that His dying for them is antecedent to their faith. "If this be the object, and formal object of faith," says Fraser, "it must be so in itself antecedently to our belief, else we could not believe, nor would our believing of it make it otherwise than it is in itself."

Finally, if reprobates did truly crucify Christ by their sins, as we are told, it follows that in some sense He died for them: "He tasted death for every man." All are commanded to look to Him whom they have pierced, and to mourn for Him. Men are said to "crucify afresh to themselves the Son of God." All this can only mean that all men, including reprobates, have an interest in Christ's death.

(8) Fraser now proceeds to deal with some of the objections likely to be raised to his theory of universal redemption. Before doing so, however, he repeats what he has already said more than once, namely, that his theory is not really contrary to that held by those who maintain a particular redemption of the elect. He is at pains to defend his orthodoxy though he feels certain that it will be

challenged. "I would have it considered and adverted to," he says, "that when I bring in and endeavour to answer these objections, that I do not this either because I judge that these objections do truly militate against what I maintain, or that I did thereby state myself as an adversary of such as are for a particular redemption of the elect only, and did side with these who maintain the universal equal extent of Christ's death, homologating the doctrine of Papists, Arminians and other adversaries of the grace of God, to whose principles I have the greatest aversion and increasing more and more as the Lord opens and makes His ways and mysteries of grace known to me, seeing likewise I do ingenuously profess that I strike in and go alongst with these who maintain a particular redemption of the elect only, in which none but themselves have an interest. I am at one work with them, yet I cannot say but I use a different mean or middle to attain this end; I say something (I cannot deny) which they say not; But I am not convinced I say ought contrary or contradictory to them; I am engaged with them in the same cause, but I choose in something a diverse method from them to prosecute it against the common enemy, for which I expect as little favour from them as others who seem more opposite, yea if this way as thus explained by me doth tend more to the overthrow of their principles, I expect they will therefore rage the more against me and my way; for it is not a drawing nearer to, or accommodation with them that I thus declare my mind, but it

is that I may the more effectually destroy their ungodly and wicked anti-scriptural principles thereby."

Now for the objections. Some hold, says Fraser, that Christ died only for those given Him of the Father to be redeemed in the covenant of redemption, i.e. the elect who alone are given Him in that covenant. Fraser replies that there is an ambiguity in the word 'given' as used here. In one sense all men are given to Christ for He is "the heir of all things," but in another sense only the elect are given to Him. "Some are given to be saved, some not, some for whose sakes Christ sanctifies Himself, who are distinct from the rest of the world."

In Rev. v. 9, it is said that Christ redeemed, not all of every kindred, but men "out of every kindred." This surely means that not all men without distinction are redeemed. Fraser replies that not all are redeemed efficaciously and in a special manner. But he adds that "it follows not but that all may be truly redeemed by a common redemption."

Some hold that redemption and salvation are inseparably connected, and that none are redeemed who shall not be saved. Fraser regards this argument as being so weak that even a Papist or an Arminian should have no difficulty in warding it off. His own answer is that there is indeed a connection between special redemption and salvation; all for whom Christ died in a special manner, i.e. the elect, shall be saved. But he denies that there is a necessary connection between

common redemption, in which all share, and salvation.

The satisfaction which Christ offered must surely be equally effectual as to their deliverance for all for whom He died; if universal redemption be maintained then does it not follow that all must be delivered ? Fraser holds that while Christ bore the sins of all, yet by the will of God, and His own consent, the satisfaction He offered was not made equally effectual for all as to their actual deliverance.

With Fraser's answer to the next objection we reach the very heart of his theory, for in it he makes the plainest and fullest statement to be found anywhere in his writings of what that theory actually is. If Christ's blood is not to be shed in vain, some one may ask, surely all for whom He died must be saved ? Otherwise "what a profuse wasting of the blood of Christ" there must be ! Fraser replies: "This argument does not move me at all, for it is built upon mistakes and false suppositions, and therefore may the consequence justly be denied; for it supposes Christ gave one satisfaction for the elect, and another for the reprobate, or that so much of Christ's blood was shed for the elect, and so much for the reprobate, in which case it may have some appearance of truth that through the unbelief of hypocrites Christ should lose some part of the travail of His soul: but Christ did by one infinite, indivisible satisfaction and ransom satisfy divine justice for the sins of all mankind, though with different intentions and ends according to the different objects thereof;



even as the Lord in the offer of the Gospel to a great multitude hath different ends to elect and reprobates which that multitude consists of; and of this one indivisible, material satisfaction, and travail of Christ's soul, is the justification and salvation of His elect, ~~from~~ whom He fore-knew and loved of His free grace and a great part of the fruit that Christ reaps, though not all the fruit; a shower of rain which the Lord graciously sends in so many and infinite drops to refresh and water the parched land and fruits of the ground cannot be said to be in vain or profusely wasted, because so many drops of it fall in the ocean or waste wilderness, of which we dark creatures see no bud, or profit, or fruit, nor know not to what end the Lord should suffer so much of it to fall, where rain doth so little good; because this shower cannot therefore be said to be fruitless but doth indeed water and fructify the earth and bring forward the parched fruits of the ground; so the one indivisible death of Christ though for reprobates, and as for them ineffectual as to their salvation; yet extending to the elect and saving them efficaciously, is not therefore vain: he that giveth a vast sum of money for a number of precious jewels contained in the cabinets, which he likewise with the same sum of money buys, if the jewels be worth his money doth not profusely waste his money, though the cabinet or case be not worth the thousandth part of the sum, for which likewise he lays out the money: because though he buys the cabinet, yet he not only buys it, but the jewels

which are worth the money, and therefore here is no profuse wasting of money: so Christ's blood was laid out for all mankind, but principally to save the elect; yet in respect the same blood shed for the reprobate materially, doth efficaciously procure the salvation of the elect, which Christ esteems a good market: it is neither profusely spent, nor inefficacious, nor in vain, nor is Christ without the travail of His soul."

Fraser's second answer to the objection is no less important. "I think the consequence not good," he continues, "because upon another false supposition, which is this, that either the salvation of the elect or others, was the ultimate or main and only end of Christ's death; whereas, as Doctor Twiss saith, the manifestation of God's grace and justice were the utmost and last end, and His getting thereby a name above all names, to which end His dying for reprobates and their unbelief and damnation following thereupon, and His dying for the elect, and their salvation through faith in His blood, were all co-ordinate means; therefore the Lord Jesus reaping the manifestation of His grace on the elect, and Gospel-wrath and vengeance on reprobates, and getting a name above all names, which was it the Lord ultimately designed; He indeed reaps the travail of His soul, and the fruit of His labours, as they did extend to both elect and reprobate in a different way; for look on the salvation of the elect in itself, it is not a fruit worthy of Christ's death, except in so far as it manifests the glorious, marvellous and infinite grace of God;

and so the damnation of reprobates for their contempt of a crucified Saviour, as it manifests God's glorious justice and Gospel-vengeance, is some way the travail and fruit of Christ's death, to purchase both which by such means, and in such a way, the infinite wisdom of God, did not think the sending of His Son to die, a vain or profuse waste, and this being thereby attained it cannot be said inefficacious; if it be said that reprobates were inexcusable however, and Christ might have manifested His wrath upon them, and glorified His justice though He had never died for them; grants all, and so might reap the glory of His grace on the elect in saving them though Christ had never died for them, if so He had pleased, and so much both Rutherford and Twiss maintain; was therefore the death of Christ needless or in vain? If ye say, though God might have saved the elect without Christ's death, and so manifested mercy (which some deny, but I do not) that here would not appear the lovely temperature of both justice and mercy in their height; I say it be so; and I say likewise that however God might show the wrath of God as Creator upon reprobates, though Christ had never died for them, which He actually shows upon fallen angels and heathens for transgressing the law of nature, yet could He not show that severe punishment, the Gospel-wrath and vengeance which He was willing to show, unless reprobates should despise the offer of the Gospel, which could not so well and clearly be tendered to them, except Christ had some way died for them; nor could

they be arraigned as guilty of His blood unless their sins had crucified Him."

It is true, says Fraser, concluding his answer to this objection, that Christ does not reap salvation as a fruit and effect in all for whom He has laboured, died, and spent His strength. "The whole course of Christ's obedience from His incarnation was destined and had a tendency to the ingathering of all; He came to save sinners, that all men might believe; and yet were not all gathered thereby, and to say that Christ's labour and strength as to this head was truly ineffectual, but was necessarily effectual as to what did relate to His death, is but at best to say, that one part of Christ's satisfaction, labour and travail was in vain, and not another." But His labour is not really in vain, for "the blood of Christ is a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to the Lord both in them that perish, and in them that are saved."

Is it not derogatory to the wisdom of God, it may be objected, for Christ to win redemption at such great cost and yet to know that that redemption is never to be conferred upon some of those for whom it was purchased? Fraser's answer is that if Christ had no other end in His dying for all than the salvation of all it would be inconceivable that God should have acted as He did, i.e. in allowing some for whom Christ died to perish; but Christ had other ends in view. "The Lord intended the manifestation of His glory which is the highest and best end that can be designed, and ordered



Christ to die, and this in such a manner as the fittest means, and most conducive and subservient to that end, to manifest, I say, His glory, that of His mercy and grace <sup>on</sup> ~~to~~ the elect, and that of His justice, power and wrath, and that of a Gospel kind, on such as should refuse the great salvation, and that the value of that blood might be to all eternity aloud proclaimed (as by so many tongues) by the great and unspeakable punishments of such, far exceeding the punishments of such as break the law of Moses, or of God as He is a Creator, which they suffer eternally who despise the same."

Is it not unjust, it will be asked, that some for whom by His death Christ purchased life and salvation should be denied these things? Further, is it not unjust that a double satisfaction should be exacted in certain cases, first, that made by Christ on the Cross, and then, that made by the reprobates themselves in hell? Fraser denies that there is any injustice here. To the first question he replies that Christ, who purchased life and salvation, Himself decided that these should be given only to those who believed, and "He that bought such a favour may confer it in any way He pleases without any breach of justice." To the second question he replies that reprobates in hell are in any case not able by all their sufferings to satisfy for the least of their sins so that to speak of double satisfaction in their case is nonsense. Further, according to Fraser, there are cases in which a double satisfaction is no injustice, e.g.



when a man is required to fulfil some condition, such as believing, before he can avail himself of a ransom paid for him, or when the price is exacted from two different persons, or when it is paid to two different persons, or when the person who exacts it is above all law, as God is whose own will and sovereign pleasure are the rule of all equity and justice. "And He that without the least stain of iniquity," says Fraser, "exacted of Christ His life for sin, a price that did far exceed the demerit of the elect, and was of such value as might satisfy for the sin of a thousand worlds, why, may He not exact over and above what Christ suffered for reprobates, even another kind of satisfaction from them in hell? Not because He was not fully satisfied by Christ, but to manifest His justice in a diverse and various manner, and the Lord is not restricted to one way of making His wrath and power known, but may use various means for that effect, though all did appear most eminently in the death of Christ: if He took an overplus of satisfaction from Christ, why may He not take it from reprobates?"

Does Scripture not make plain that Christ died only for those who shall eventually be justified; in other words, that all for whom He died shall in the end be justified and saved? Fraser denies this. He agrees that no one can be justified apart from the death of Christ, but holds that in addition to the death of Christ there must be faith before a man can be justified. "It is true Christ must die for all that are

justified, but this is not the all, or the adequate cause of their justification. for it is required that they believe as an instrumental cause without which they cannot be justified, though Christ's blood is the only and adequate meritorious and material cause of justification."

We speak of the greatness of God's love of which Christ's dying for men is a proof. If it be held that Christ died for reprobates that must mean that He loved them also with a very great love, but that is not true for we read in Scripture, "Esau have I hated." Fraser replies that there are two kinds of love - common love, and special love. Not all for whom Christ died are the objects of God's special love. "Christ dying for all may argue that Christ hath a great measure of common love to them; which common love is consistent with hatred to them as it is opposite to special love, so as the Lord may be said to hate all whom He hath not chosen but passed .... The death of Christ as terminated to the elect did proceed from love and special love, the same death as terminated to the reprobate did flow from common love." It is only from special love that final salvation flows.

To hold that Christ died for all is surely to cast cold water upon the faith and love of saints, for if Christ died for reprobates as well as for them what special cause have they to be thankful to Him? Fraser answers this objection by repeating that he has said over and over again about the special manner in which Christ died for the elect. There is

a special redemption in which none but the latter share, and in that fact they find great cause for thankfulness; it strengthens both their faith and their love.

In His great intercessory prayer Christ interceded for all for whom He was to die, but He excluded reprobates - "I pray not for the world" - does this not imply that He was not to die for the latter? "If He would not spend His breath to pray for them, He would not shed His blood to die for them." To this Fraser replies that while Arminians, for example, deny that Christ excluded reprobates from His prayer, he himself questions this, preferring to hold that "Christ prayed for all He died for with intention to save, and in a special manner to save .... Christ might die and did die for some He never prayed for .... If Christ had prayed for reprobates He would have been heard .... He had (not) really purposed and willed their salvation, else He would have prayed for that, which He never purposed to get or obtain for them, and which He never designed they should get."

Does not Scripture imply that Christ died not for all, e.g. when it says that He died to purify to Himself a people zealous of good works, to redeem His people from this present world, and to present His Church without spot or wrinkle? It is plain, says Fraser, that Christ died to justify, sanctify and purify the elect, but it does not follow that He died only for those He purposed and had intention to justify and save from sin, wrath and hell. "It will not follow that all that

~~all that~~ have the Gospel preached to them shall be justified and saved, or that this was God's intention to all and every one to whom the Gospel is preached .... God's intention, and purpose He designed, was indeed to save the elect amongst them, but not to save the rest, but that they contemning and rejecting the offer of salvation might be made fit objects to show His just Gospel-vengeance and wrath upon them."

If all men are redeemed then how is it that some, quite apart from their faith, are justified and reconciled, while others because of their unbelief are condemned and made heirs of wrath? The reply to this is that all without exception are in a state of condemnation till they believe. Again Fraser brings forward his favourite illustration of a man who has been put to the horn, denounced, and cast into prison for debt. Even though a friend in his name and on his behalf should pay the debt still the debtor remains a prisoner until he accepts the discharge which has been purchased for him. "Even so do we continue the captives of sin and Satan, and under his power, and in a state of condemnation, though our debt be paid by Christ, and thereby we fundamentally justified and free; though not formally till we believe."

To tell wicked men that Christ died for them will only harden them and lead them to presume. Not so, says Fraser, for it is constantly affirmed and declared that while Christ died for all yet His death will not effectually save any who do not through a sense of sin and misery close with Him.



Scripture asserts that Christ bore the sins of many; does that not imply that He did not bear the sins of all? Scripture uses the word 'many' when 'all' is really meant, e.g. "many of them that sleep shall awake, some to life, some to shame and contempt."

Christ is said to lay down His life for His sheep, and for them to sanctify Himself; does this not imply that He died for them only? It does not follow that He did not die for others as well, replies Fraser; all that is implied is that He has a special care for His elect, and that "there is a special redemption of the elect in which no reprobate hath any interest; and that Christ died not for reprobates in the same manner as for the elect."

To affirm that Christ died for all is surely contrary to the teaching of the most godly and judicious Protestant divines, to the Confession of Faith, and to the professed doctrine of our Church; further it is disputed by our most famous men, and odious to all that truly fear God. Fraser's answer to this objection is of great importance, first, in that it indicates how confident he was that his view was perfectly orthodox, and secondly, in so far as it discloses the sources from which his theory came. "The testimony of the Protestant Church," he confesses, "is of such weight with me truly, that however I would not build my faith on it, yet durst I never contradict it, and rather suspect my own apprehension than question the authority of so many."



"I deny," he continues, "that Protestant divines generally are against the extent of Christ's death in this sense. Luther and all his followers are for it, so are many Calvinists; many of the reformed French divines; most of the professors of Saumure, with many others cited by Dalleus; and lastly among our approven modern British divines, Mr. William Fenner and Doctor Preston, therefore it is too widely spoken to affirm it contrary to the current of Protestant divines." Nor is it contrary, he believes, to the Confession of Faith. "No article (of the Confession) I suppose can with any colour be alleged but the last article of the 8th Chapter; and to any who considers it, it will not be so much against what I maintain, as against what Arminians hold: for all those for whom Christ died (it saith) to them He doth apply His death, that is, for all those for whose sakes He died, and sanctifies Himself in that manner He doth for His elect, to all those He doth in time apply the benefits of His death; but it was never their mind to affirm that all those for whom Christ died sufficienter, that to all these He doth apply the benefits of His death. I will not oppose Assemblies of divines, and English divines to Assemblies of English; but let any read the Book of the Thirty-Nine Articles composed by an Assembly of English Protestants, and there you will find in the 31st Article of that Book, the extent of Christ's death plainly mentioned; and if ye seek to explain their universality, ye cannot think it but unjust to deny me a liberty likewise to explain the

speciality in our Confession of Faith at Westminster."

The last article in the 8th Chapter of the Westminster Confession, to which Fraser here refers, is as follows :- "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them; and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by His word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation." In the 31st Article of the Thirty-Nine Articles it is affirmed that "the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone."

With reference to the charge that his theory is opposed to the professed doctrine of the Church of Scotland Fraser confesses that he believes that what he holds is as little contrary to that doctrine as it is to the Confession of Faith. "As little do I judge what I maintain contrary to the doctrine of the Church of Scotland and to what is maintained by the most approved and learned writers thereof; though I confess I have expressed myself variously from them on this head; if particular persons judge what I say contrary, I am not to lay weight on their judgment as the judgment of the Church of

Scotland: if they reply Durham and Mr. Rutherford are for particular redemption and against Arminian and conditional redemption, so am I too: I plainly deny, and I speak as I think, that neither Durham nor Mr. Rutherford contradict what I say; particular persons, I know, think they do, and I firmly believe otherways." Fraser's unshakeable belief is that his theory of the extent of Christ's death is "neither contrary to Scripture, Confession of Faith, reformed Protestant divines, nor profession of our own Church."

(9) With regard to the extent of Christ's death, as with all other Christian doctrines, Fraser agrees that there are many difficulties and mysteries to be cleared.

For example, is this theory of universal redemption consistent with belief in the decree of reprobation? If by God's absolute decree of reprobation some are ordained to be damned is it conceivable that Christ should undertake to die for such? Fraser believes that his theory is consistent with belief in the decree of reprobation. He does not enter into the question of whether that decree is prior or not to the covenant of redemption beyond saying that in his opinion they are both from eternity, in which there is no priority or posteriority. But supposing, as the objectors do, that the decree of reprobation is distinct from and prior to the covenant of redemption, certain things are clear :- (a) "The Lord from all eternity did of His own free will purpose to manifest His wrath, power and justice on some, and nothing foreseen in man

is the cause of this purpose"; (b) "The Lord purposed to manifest on some, not only Law-wrath, but Gospel-wrath .... Many are and shall lie under the Gospel-vengeance"; (c) "Though sin or unbelief be not the cause of God's decree of reprobation, yet is unbelief the mean through which the decree is executed, and therefore is the decree respective of it"; (d) Finally, "That this Gospel-wrath might be manifested on some, who were to be arraigned and punished as guilty of the blood of the Son of God, and who were therefore to have an offer of the Gospel, that is, of salvation through Christ's blood, which they were to reject and slight, necessary it was therefore Christ should die for them, that this blood shed for them, offered for them, and remission of sins through it, they should despise it, and be thereby fitted objects of that sorer and worse punishment appointed for some."

Since Christ in securing salvation for the elect has done more for them than for the reprobate that surely means that He has given more for the former and less for the latter. Not necessarily, replies Fraser, for Christ's sacrifice is indivisible; we cannot say that this part is for the elect, and that for the reprobate. "Christ by one indivisible action, and one infinite indivisible price satisfied for all men's sins; He satisfied not for the elect apart and for the reprobate apart." Further, even among the elect not all enjoy the same gifts, some having more than others, yet it does not follow that the elect are not all equally redeemed.

What of the heathen who never hear the Gospel ? Even supposing Christ died for them they cannot be saved by His death for they have never heard of it, nor can Gospel-wrath be inflicted upon them for despising something of which they are unaware. Fraser's reply is that, for one thing, God's intentions in many things are unknown and unsearchable. "Can you tell why the Lord in a shower of rain lets so many drops fall on the rocks, and in the vast ocean to no end we can imagine ? Or can you tell why the Lord made so many precious stones of such singular vertue, all of them profitable for man ? .... And yet far the greatest part of these excellent stones undiscovered in the bowels of the earth (and for ought I know will be till time be no more) by any of the sons of men to whose use they were created: seeing there is an universal donation of them, why not an universal revelation of them ?" Further, as Christ died for all mankind, it is clear that He died for the heathen as well as for others, for they are part of mankind. And finally, the heathen though they have never heard the Gospel do even now enjoy many favours from Christ, and by His purchase of them Christ has a power over them to do with them as He pleases.

What of infants, for example, or deaf persons - persons who never were in a position to reject the Gospel, and yet are not saved ? These, says Fraser, are mysteries which we ought not to concern ourselves with. There may be some act of unbelief in such persons of which we know nothing; on the



other hand God may work grace in them in some extraordinary way of which equally we know nothing, and so save them.

Did Christ die for those who sin against the Holy Ghost, and in particular did He die for that particular sin of which they are guilty ? This is another of those mysteries into which we are not required to go, but Fraser's own opinion is that Christ died for such people in order that they might be forgiven all sins, except the sin against the Holy Ghost for which there is no pardon.

Has Christ purchased faith for the reprobate ? And if He has how is it that they do not believe ? And if He has not then His dying for them is ~~of~~ no avail ? "As without Christ's death we cannot be saved, so no more can we be saved without faith." Fraser can find no Scripture that says that Christ did or did not purchase faith for the reprobate. But he is clear that whether it was or was not purchased for them it did not please God to give it to them. This however does not affect His main contention that Christ died for all, and by so doing gave a sufficient ground for faith.

What of those who were actually damned before Christ came in the flesh ? Can a pardon be procured for a malefactor already executed ? Does it really matter, Fraser asks, for in any case Christ never intended to save the reprobate ?

Does not this theory of universal redemption imply that there are two covenants of redemption, one for the elect and

~~The~~ one for the reprobate ? No, there is only one, but it comprehends diverse objects and things; the elect are its special, principal object but not its only object.

(10) One may be certain, says Fraser, that Christ had great, wise, and holy ends in His dying for all, ends which it may be assumed could not have been attained had He died only for some.

The first of these ends was that the elect should be saved by faith. Men must know that He died for all otherwise they have no sure ground for faith. "What's ure ground can be given for grounding the faith of a sinner in this that Christ died for him, unless it be made out and held that Christ died for all ? .... Christ died therefore for all for this end, that there might be a sufficient sure ground to bottom faith upon without which the elect could not in a rational way believe."

The second end Christ had in view when He died for all was "That reprobates, slighting the offer of the Gospel and salvation, and misbelieving notwithstanding of such clear grounds of faith, might be made utterly inexcusable and so liable to that sorer and greater punishment which shall be inflicted on unbelievers, hence Christ is a rock of offence, a gin, a trap, a stone of stumbling to, and for the fall of many."

The third end is that the glory of the grace of the second covenant might be illustrated, and that where sin

abounds grace might be shown to superabound. If sin had reigned over all, and grace had been purchased only for the few then "Satan's conquest had been larger than Christ's, the salve had not reached so far as the sore."

Finally, "Christ died for all that He might be Lord over all .... He died for all, that He might establish His right of lordship and superiority over all."

(11) Fraser again repeats what he has already stated over and over again in this Appendix, namely, that Christ died in a special manner for the elect, and that there is for them a redemption in which none but they have an interest. They are a peculiar or special people, and Christ redeems them with a peculiar or special redemption. Indeed all they receive from Christ comes to them through a special channel.

Christ, Fraser continues, has a special goodwill and love for the elect; for the reprobate He has no such goodwill or love. He died with the special design and purpose of saving the elect. When He satisfied for the sins of all men He did not design and intend thereby to save all men, else all should have been saved. He died sufficiently for all, including the reprobate, but for the elect and them alone He died efficaciously; there is a special effectual call which reaches none but the latter; they are powerfully and irresistibly drawn to Christ. There is a special compact between the Father and the Son in the covenant of redemption in reference to the elect, wherein it was agreed upon that

they should believe and come to Christ, and be thereby infallibly saved. When Christ died for men He prayed for the elect but not for the whole world; though He died for reprobates and satisfied for their sins He did not pray for them that this satisfaction might become effectual for them. The elect are the principle and chief objects of Christ's death. If it were not for them no reprobate would ever have had any offer of the Gospel made to him; "whatever favours reprobates enjoy," says Fraser, "as I look on them as the fruits of Christ's death, so do I look on them as bestowed for the elect's sake."

Fraser concludes this section by saying that in his opinion all Arminian objections to his theory are answered by this distinction between special and common redemption. He holds that none of the arguments which he has advanced can be used to prove or support the Arminian theory, nor is there in them anything derogatory to the grace, love, wisdom or sovereignty of God.

(12) Finally, the object of Christ's death is, once more, mankind in general. "Christ assumed or took our human nature, therefore did Christ satisfy for human nature, and therefore satisfied for all and every individual of that species; for what is truly predicable of the kind or species, is predicable of every individual of that kind, hence there is a mankind love .... and hence Christ is holden forth universally to all."

To the 1749 Treatise there is a postscript which has special reference to this Appendix in particular rather than to the Treatise as a whole so I give it here.

"I have now," writes Fraser, "through the Lord's good hand upon me finished this work; if I seem to some to affect singularity, and to walk in untrodden paths in respect of some positions here inserted, I cannot help folk's misconstructions; I shall be truly grieved if anything uttered by me be offensive to any; and as I am verily persuaded that I have not walked alone, or against the current of orthodox, godly, protestant divines to my knowledge in anything here set down, so I am free to declare that I affect no singularity, but love to see the footsteps of the flock of Christ before me always, and were our charity greater, there would not be such misconstructions of one another as there are; but pride, through which only cometh contention and want of love, makes, keeps up, and widens breaches; I do not for my own part so tenaciously adhere to anything as to shut mine ears against all reason, but shall be most ready to close with anything which hath the conviction of truth with it, though contrary to what I maintain for the present; till which time I cannot but believe according to that evidence in which things are presented to me.

"As for other weaknesses and infirmities herein, as want of accuracy, learning, reading or pungency, (of which I am very sensible) I hope I shall be excused, if it be considered what manifold afflictions and temptations I was diverted with



while I was writing this; and how being a prisoner in a desolate rock of the sea for the testimony of Jesus Christ; I had not the use of so much as one book of which I could make use save my Bible, and little converse allowed me with one another through the severity of our keepers.

"And now blessed be the good Lord who of His grace hath been pleased not only to put me out to begin this work, but who hath graciously been pleased to stand by and assist his unworthy poor servant, and carry me alongst in this till I have finished the same, notwithstanding of manifold discouragements. What errors or weakness may be herein I heartily seek pardon for in the blood, and through the merits of the Lord Jesus, in whom I desire both myself and works may be accepted, and earnestly beseech the Lord so far to manifest His acceptance of the same, as it may be blessed for clearing of God's precious truths, and for the edification and building up of the souls of God's people in their most holy faith; which if the Lord so far favour me as to attain, I shall think my labour more than abundantly compensated, looking up to Him for this. To the blessed Lord, and fountain of all good, the king of kings, and lord of lords, be all praise, glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

#### IV

#### FRASER ' S   S O U R C E S

"I was much helped by Luther on the Galatians, and Calvin's Institutions; something more by that book called the Marrow of Modern Divinity; by some old writers, as Fox, Bradwardin's Letters, Mr. Hamilton, and Wisheart; but especially by reading the Epistle to the Romans, by prayer and meditation, by which I came to receive very much satisfaction in my mind in the Gospel."

- Fraser's Memoirs, pp. 232,233.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ORTHODOX CALVINISM

It is impossible to read through Fraser's works without coming to the conclusion that as far at least as nine-tenths of his theology is concerned he was true to orthodox Calvinism. Most of those who have written about him or given any thought to his teaching have been at one in regarding him as a Calvinist, and a rigid one at that. Prof. W.G. Bleikie, for example, refers to him as "an ultra-Calvinist" (1). James Walker says of him that "he wrought out a theory of universal redemption from the extremest positions of his ultra-Calvinistic masters" (2); and Matthew Hutchison, the historian of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, speaks of him as "holding extreme Calvinistic views" on points other than the extent of the Atonement (3).

It is quite clear that Fraser had no desire to break away from the Calvinistic system of doctrine, and though his universalism, in spite of his repeated assertions to the contrary, is something more than an explication of Calvinistic teaching with reference to the extent of redemption, yet he remained to the end a convinced Calvinist. Over and over again he claimed to be loyal to all the distinctive Calvinistic

tenets, and while most people will agree that his universalism was something added to his Calvinism all he himself was prepared to admit was that in it he merely elaborated and clarified certain features of the system which had hitherto been left obscure.

His debt to Calvin and to the great Calvinists of his own and earlier generations, such as Rutherford, Twiss, Dickson, and Durham, was one which he gladly acknowledged. In the Memoirs, for example, he confesses that he "was much helped .... by Calvin's Institutions" (4). In the First Faith Treatise, where he deals with those who hold what he regards as an erroneous view of the nature of justifying faith, he says, "When they become better acquainted with their own hearts, and heart exercises, they will think otherwise, and be of judicious Calvin his mind, who in his third Book of Institutions, clearly and solidly refuteth this doctrine" (4). Later on in the same Treatise he refers to those who have "slipped out of the good old way, where Calvin, Luther, and the first Reformers walk'd" (5).

He mentions repeatedly the Westminster standards, particularly the Confession of Faith, and always in terms of approbation. Never does he concede that his teaching may differ in any essential point from that of the Confession or of the Catechisms, and yet, as W.A. Shaw points out, the Confession "amounted, in a word, to a clear-cut Calvinistic symbol - the expression of a Calvinism, generic it is true in

form, but unyielding and unmodified on the subject of the Divine decrees, and of the restriction of the Redemption to the elect" (6). The same writer speaks of the Larger Catechism as in a great measure an abridgement from the Confession, and of the Shorter as less directly so abridged, but quite as thoroughly Calvinistic.

As has already been pointed out Fraser, in his Appendix on Christ's Death, where his particular theory is most fully developed, goes out of his way more than once to assert that in his opinion his theory does not contradict orthodox teaching on the question of the extent of the Atonement. He deals at considerable length with the contention that his teaching is "contrary to the current of the most godly and judicious Protestant divines, contrary to our Confession of Faith; and to the professed doctrine of the Church we live in; disputed against by our most famous men; and odious to all that truly fear God, and therefore not to be maintained" (7). In reply he denies that "Protestant divines generally are against the extent of Christ's death" in the sense in which he has expounded it in the Appendix, and goes on to say that "Luther and all his followers are for it, so are many Calvinists; many of the Reformed French divines; most of the professors of Saumur, with many others cited by Dailleus; and lastly among our own approved modern British divines, Mr. William Fenner and Doctor Preston, therefore it is too widely spoken to affirm it contrary to the current of Protestant divines" (8). He



then proceeds to prove, to his own satisfaction at any rate, that his theory is not contrary to the Confession of Faith, nor to the received doctrines of the Church of Scotland.

Whatever may be said about Fraser's universalism there is no question about the strict Calvinism which marks his theology in other matters. He has every right to claim to be an adherent of the Calvinistic system - a system which has called forth more wholehearted devotion on the one hand, and on the other more bitter opposition than any other in the history of Christian dogma. Its adherents have been as vehement in its defence as its detractors have been in its condemnation. In the Reformer whose name it bears Lord Morley found "a union of fervid religious instinct and profound political genius almost unexampled in European history," and a more recent commentator speaks of him as "perhaps the most potent intellectual force in the world between St. Thomas Aquinas and Voltaire" (9). Calvin was pre-eminently the theologian of the Reformation. As a theologian indeed he ranks with the greatest in the long story of the Christian Church. Building upon the foundation laid by the pioneers who preceded him, in particular Luthér and Bucer, he clarified and systematised the theology of the Reformed Church. "Luther had cleared the ground and provided the rough material," says Dr. Mitchell Hunter; "there was now required a man less of originative than of architectonic mind to shape and build that material into its proper place

and so fashion an organised Church, defined by its ordered system of belief. Providence provided Calvin for that task" (10).

In his Institutes, of which what one might call the definitive edition appeared in 1559, Calvin gave to the world a book which has had greater influence upon the course of theological study than almost any other work, with the sole exception of the Bible itself. A recent writer, not notably biassed in favour of Calvinism, refers to it as "a book which played for generations in Scotland the part of Das Kapital recently in Russia or Mein Kampf more recently still in Germany. It was not, perhaps, more widely read than Marx, but its statements were likewise regarded by their acceptors as fundamental axioms of their creed, from which it was blasphemous madness to dissent" (11). "In Calvin's expositions," says Dr. Williston Walker, "the theology of the Reformation age rose to a clearness and dignity of statement and a logical precision of definition that have never been surpassed .... Calvin's system has stood the test of time better than most expositions of religious truth .... Calvin's system has been like a tonic in the blood, and its educative effects are to be traced in the lands in which it has held sway even among those who have departed widely from his habit of thought. The spiritual indebtedness of western Europe and of North America to the educative influence of Calvin's theology is well-nigh measureless" (12).

It is quite unnecessary to say much of Scotland's debt to Calvinism, or of the place which the system held in the life and thought of the Covenanters. From the time of Knox, and the Scots Confession and the First Book of Discipline, Calvinism was supreme and virtually unchallenged in Scotland. Knox had seen in Geneva what he regarded as "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on the earth since the days of the Apostles" (13). "Lutheranism had wakened him to the truth," says one of his most recent, though not most sympathetic, biographers; "Calvinism formed his mind and character. From his discipline in Geneva he emerged with his original obstinacy of nature, his certainty of his own righteousness, and his intolerance fortified by an objective and triumphant sanction. He emerged from it too with a resolve to turn the world into a greater Geneva" (14). To a very great extent Knox was successful in converting his countrymen to Calvinism. As G.M. Thomson has put it, "Calvin's relentless logic struck a chord in them which had never vibrated before; it was to become the greatest single influence for good and ill that operated on the mind of this people, that caught them and wrought them at the supremely malleable moment of their history, and left an impress on them which three centuries have not been able to erase" (15).

When the Westminster standards were drawn up and accepted by Scotland the tide of Calvinistic doctrine was still running strongly through all western Europe. And in some respects

those standards are more Calvinistic than Calvin himself, which perhaps is not to be wondered at when one remembers that they were intended to combat the heresies of the time. Of the Confession of Faith George Gillespie, one of the Scots assessors at Westminster, said in a speech in the General Assembly at Edinburgh in 1647, in which he dealt with the work done in London, that "it is so framed so as it is of great use against the floods of heresies and errors that overflow that land; nay, their intention of framing of it was to meet with all the considerable errors of the present tyme, the Socinian, Arminian, Popish, Antinomian, Anabaptist, Independent, errors, etc" (16). The Covenanters were Calvinists who accepted almost without a single question the whole Calvinistic position. In particular they were almost all of them thoroughgoing predestinarians. "The theologians of the Second Reformation and the Covenanting struggle," as Prof. Hastie points out, "were all equally earnest in maintaining the fundamental doctrine, and even carried it to its highest theological expression. The discussion of Predestination by Samuel Rutherford, the author of the celebrated Letters, is justly famed as a masterpiece of profound thought, recondite learning, and metaphysical argumentation, not unworthy of Calvin and Beza themselves. At the Synod of Dort the Scottish Commissioner stood firmly by the orthodox principle; and the Covenanting opposition to the innovations of Laud went deeper into the heart of the evangelical faith than the external question as to the use of

a prayer-book or the assertion of the right of Presbyterian independence" (17).

It is true that in the later Covenanting period Calvinism was a much more rigid and unbending thing than it was when the Institutes sent it forth into the world. In the interval it had passed through a hardening process which had robbed it of some of those qualities and characteristics which distinguished it when it was first launched in the sixteenth century. But the system of doctrine which held undisputed sway in Scotland when Fraser lived and wrote was still in all essentials the Calvinism of the Institutes, and to that system Fraser, apart from certain aspects of his universalism, was loyal.

Fraser believed in and taught the absolute sovereignty of God, and that is, of course, the cardinal doctrine in the Calvinistic system. Calvin held, as Dr. Williston Walker points out, that God's "kingly sovereignty, His glorious majesty, His all-perfect and all-controlling will are the highest objects of man's adoration, and the prime concern of all human interest" (18). If Dr. W.F. Lofthouse is right in holding that every prophet, like every religious teacher, must finally be judged by what he has to tell us about the mind and will and character of God, then Calvin both by the prominence he gives to the thought of God and by the rich content he puts into it has every right to the name of a prophet. His entire system, as Dr. Mitchell Hunter says, "is built upon his doctrine of God. His views on Atonement, on the Sacraments,



and on matters ecclesiastical, are either derived from it or shaped and coloured by it. The consideration of this doctrine, then, is a necessary introduction to the proper understanding of his teaching on these and other subjects. Calvin himself was, if not a God-intoxicated, at least a God-possessed man. His whole mind, heart and life were vitalised, governed and suffused by his thought of God. Of no man could it be more truly said that he set God ever before him .... His master-thought was that of the sovereignty of God .... The sovereignty of God dominates Calvin's thought and forms the citadel into which he retreats whenever hard pressed by antagonists" (19). Religion to Calvin meant "the acceptance of the rule of God over one's whole life" (20). He conceived of God's sovereignty as extending over all persons and events from eternity to eternity. "Our very being," he says in the very first paragraph of the Institutes, "is nothing else than subsistence in God alone" (21).

It is not too much to say that the strength of Calvinism is to be found in the place and pre-eminence it gave to the thought of God. It magnified Him, and humbled man before His majesty. It had much to say of the glory of God, a glory to which all nature bears witness. The more men study the works of God the more do they realise His power, goodness, and wisdom. The glory of God must ever be the deepest concern of all His children; "believers," says Calvin in his Commentary on Galatians, "would rather choose that the whole

world should perish than that the smallest portion of the glory of God should be withdrawn." The glory of God and the necessity laid upon man to maintain it at all costs must be regarded as sufficient answer to all the riddles which defy us to find a solution elsewhere. "There are questions concerning the ultimates of things before which conjecture stands tongue-tied. When Calvin had no answers to give them, he was wont to take refuge in the phrase, for the glory of God. In the assertion, maintenance or advancement of that glory lay the key to all riddles. Creation, reprobation, heaven and hell, all alike find their explanation in the enhancement of God's glory. To glorify Him was the supreme purpose and final end of all His activities, as man's chief end was to glorify God" (22). Professor Hugh Watt speaks of "the authentic glow of the glory of the Infinite and Sovereign God .... irradiating the superficially arid and sombre outline of the Calvinistic scheme" (23).

To all that Calvin said of God Fraser gave a willing assent. He too believed in God's absolute sovereignty, and in the thought of that sovereignty found a solution for all life's enigmas. The glory and majesty of God were very real to him, and all his teaching had as its aim the advancement of that glory. His sufferings were patiently borne in the faith that they were part of God's will for him, and that by steadfast endurance and unflinching courage he contributed in some small measure to God's glory.

Closely linked with his doctrine of God was Calvin's doctrine of Scripture, and here again Fraser was at one with him. To the question, How is God to be known? Calvin's answer was immediate and unequivocal: "we do not seek God anywhere else than in His Word, we do not think of Him save with His Word, we speak nothing of Him save through His Word." He maintained that "to the great truths, What God is in Himself, and what He is in relation to us, human reason makes not the slightest approach" (24). If we wish to know God we must turn to the Scriptures, for there alone can we find Him. And it is not only for our knowledge of Him that we must turn to the Scriptures: nothing worth knowing, no great doctrine of any kind, is to be grasped apart from them. "It is impossible," he held, "for any man to obtain even the minutest portion of right and sound doctrine without being a disciple of Scripture" (25).

Calvin believed in the inerrancy, equal authority, and uniform consistency of Scripture. "The full authority which the Scriptures ought to possess with the faithful," he insisted, "is not recognised, unless they are believed to have come from heaven, as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them" (26). "Scripture," he continued, "bears upon the face of it as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black do of their colour, sweet and bitter of their taste" (27). For him the Bible was infallibly the very Word of God from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation.

"All his treatment of Scripture," says Prof. G.D. Henderson, "is governed by the fundamental conviction that it is the Word of God and therefore preaches Christ crucified from the first page to the last and is to be read in that light" (28). "It was a fixed principle with him," according to Dr. Mitchell Hunter, "that he would not go beyond what the express teaching of Scripture authorised. Every doctrine that presented itself for acceptance had to submit to the test of the touchstone of the Word" (29).

As has often been pointed out, the Reformers had to give men, when the authority of the Church of Rome was no longer acknowledged, some alternative foundation upon which religious faith might rest. This they did by putting Scripture in the place which had previously been occupied by the Church, and by establishing it upon grounds which dispensed with the authorisation of the Church. This necessity also explains the emphasis which Calvin and his brother Reformers placed upon the translation of the Scriptures into a language which the common people could understand. He and they thought it no small part of the obligation laid upon them to make the Bible readily accessible to all and sundry. That is surely to be reckoned among the greatest blessings which the Reformation brought in its train.

That Fraser held the same high doctrine of Scripture as Calvin is evident even upon a cursory glance through any of his works. One or two sentences from his Lawfulness and

Duty of Separation may suffice to illustrate the point. "The Word of God is the ground of faith. A Church's testimony is a poor ground of faith .... All things necessary to be believed and done are contained in the Scriptures (which are) a perfect rule of the whole man .... Whatever concerns the duty of man, as it is perfectly revealed in the Scriptures, so it is clearly and plainly revealed in some place or other: for God giveth not an uncertain sound. For otherwise it should fail in its main end; and the revelation of His will were no revelation .... God's will, thus clearly revealed in His Word, is the rule to the Lord's people of all their actions, according to which, and by which they should walk and be regulated .... The people of God may therefore see and know, from the Lord's will in His Word, what is their duty .... Whatever, therefore, God reveals in His Word, as duty, or sin, that must be accordingly done or shunned by the Lord's people, whether the Church be for it, or no .... In all our acts we should be squared by the Scriptures; which is acknowledged intelligible to those whose minds the God of this world hath not blinded; and Church and State acting contrary to the Word of God act without the sphere of their authority; and no obedience, either active or passive, is due but unto God and agreeably to His will" (30).

Calvin's doctrine of man is also Fraser's. Calvin held that man was made in the image of God, but that in Adam he fell, and in that fall, the result of infidelity, ambition, pride, and ingratitude, the whole human race was involved in



original sin. Original sin he defined as "a corruption and hereditary perversity of our nature, which, embracing every part of the same, makes us guilty in the first place of the wrath of God, and then produces in us the works which the Scriptures call the works of the flesh." He interpreted literally the story of the creation of the world and man as related in Genesis; he dealt in the same way with the story of the fall. The soul, he held, as a result of that fall, is "altogether void of God." With Augustine he believed that man in his fallen estate is utterly incapable of doing anything for himself spiritually; he cannot take even the first step on the road that leads to God. With Luther he maintained that human nature is absolutely and actively bad, naturally vicious and completely dominated by evil. "The will," he said, "is enchained as the slave of sin, it cannot make a movement towards goodness, far less steadily pursue it."

Calvin was uncompromising in this belief of his that nothing the natural man can do has merit of itself. "We must strongly insist upon these two things," he said, "that no believer ever performed one work which, if tested by the strict judgment of God, could escape condemnation; and, moreover, that were this granted to be possible (though it is not), yet the act being vitiated and polluted by the sins of which it is certain that the author of it is guilty, it is deprived of its merit" (31). He held that man's total depravity included the loss of free-will; he saw grave peril even in the

use of the term 'free-will.' "I am unwilling to use it myself," he confessed, "and others, if they take my advice, will do well to abstain from it."

Fraser's doctrine of man is in all essential points the same as that of the Institutes. As we have already seen, for example in his Meditations on Several Subjects, and also in Some Choice Select Meditations, he is much concerned with the fact of human sin, and the havoc it caused in the world. By far the larger part of the first of the works just mentioned is taken up with discussions of the nature of sin, its deadly character, its insidious method of effecting a lodgement in the soul of man, and the ways and means to be adopted for its overthrow (cf. p. 281.). In the second work there is the same grave view of sin; there also Fraser makes it quite plain that he is under no illusions with regard to the evil which it works in human life (cf. p. 313.). And this is true of all his writings, and especially of his Memoirs where page after page is devoted to sin and the problems it creates.

In his thought of Christ and salvation through Him Fraser shows no marked divergence from the teaching of the Institutes, with of course the exception of his universalism. Calvin taught that man, unable by reason of his black legacy of original sin to do anything for himself, finds help in the mercy of God who through Christ in His threefold offices as prophet, priest, and king works salvation for him. Salvation comes to man through Christ, and in particular through His

death. "Christ, in His death," he said, "was offered to the Father as a propitiatory victim .... Not only was the body of Christ given up as the price of redemption, but that which was a greater and more excellent price - that He bore in His soul the tortures of the condemned and ruined man." He believed, As Dr. James Mackinnon says, that "the hopeless corruption and degradation of human nature have rendered necessary the redemption of Jesus Christ, through whom alone salvation is possible .... The grand act of redemption consists in the voluntary subjection of Himself to the death that we had merited .... He paid our penalty and thereby delivered us from it. The legal character of the action is strongly emphasised. At the same time, by His death He not only bore the death sentence for us, but destroyed the power of death and bequeathed the power of a new life in the death of the old man, the mortification of the flesh" (32). Justification Calvin regarded as a judicial act on the part of God by which as judge He absolves the accused, doing so without regard to anything in him. This justification is made possible by the obedience of Christ, who took upon Himself the form of a servant, became flesh, and suffered in order that His righteousness might become ours in God's sight.

The question has often been asked, With his hard and fast doctrine of predestination, how could Calvin find a place for Christ and His work? "It was enough for Calvin," as Dr. Mitchell Hunter says by way of reply, "that God chose the 'way

of salvation' through Christ. It might not be intrinsically necessary, but that there was in it some inherent reasonableness might be taken for granted" (33). For reasons known to Himself alone God chose this way, the way of Christ, for saving the elect. Election, according to Calvin, is morally impossible apart from atonement. Before God can cancel the doom written against the name of every sinner the penalty must be paid by him or by someone on his behalf. Calvin was unswerving in his allegiance to the substitutionary view of the Atonement.

The salvation which is offered<sup>e</sup> to man in and through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ has to be appropriated by him. What Christ has done for him becomes his only through faith on his part. Faith, as Calvin conceived it, is no mere acceptance of historic facts or of a system of belief, but a vital union in a new life between the believer and Christ, having its origin in nothing in man, but in the secret efficacy of the Spirit. Its consequence and inseparable accompaniment is repentance. "Faith is the assured knowledge of salvation by Christ, revealed to our understanding and sealed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. But it is not knowledge in the ordinary sense, knowledge which can be taught by demonstration and argument. It is the firm conviction or persuasion of what surpasses the capacity of human intelligence to grasp since it deals with things infinite. For Calvin it is of the nature of an intuition supernaturally inspired by the

Holy Spirit" (34). Calvin regarded the repentance which is the fruit of faith as "a true conversion of our life to follow God and the way which He shows, ~~p~~roceeding from a right and unfeigned fear of God, and showing itself in the mortification of the flesh and the old man, and a vitalising of the spirit." When faced with the necessity of reconciling the thought of divine election with the necessity for human faith Calvin asserted that faith is not a kind of merit on the part of man which makes him so far deserving of salvation, but a gift from God; it is dependent upon divine election and flows from it.

Fraser's teaching with regard to Christ, salvation, and faith is essentially the same as that of Calvin. In the First Faith Treatise we find him saying: "Jesus Christ as crucified, and crucified for our sins, as the mean of justification, is the formal object, and that on which faith believes" (35). Of justifying faith he says in the same Treatise that it is something more than mere assent to certain truths, or mere acceptance of certain historic facts; it is "the actual receiving of the faithful saying, Christ came to save sinners, by the particular application of the promise according to God's command for justification, sanctification and glory" (36). He holds with Calvin that faith is the gift of God; "faith is said to be from God in a particular manner, because wrought in ~~the~~ a supernatural way in the soul, to which it hath no natural dispositions" (37). "Man," he insists, "is dead in trespasses and sins, and can therefore no more come to Christ



by his own strength than a dead man can walk or move till he be quickened" (38) These quotations are all taken from the same Treatise but they can be paralleled from practically every one of Fraser's works.

Calvin had much to say about predestination and providence. These two are of course closely related, but they have to be ~~to~~ distinguished from one another. "The doctrine of Predestination deals with God's relation to the ultimate destinies of individual men," says Dr. Mitchell Hunter, "that of Providence with His treatment of men here and now. Providence is concerned with this world and this life, though of course its issues pass beyond into the next: it is the experiential side of the divine decrees. Predestination in its limited sense is concerned solely with the fate of men hereafter, though it in turn takes this life into its purview as providing material for justifying the ways of God with man. It constitutes the metaphysical side of the divine decrees ... Predestination defines the relation of God to the world; Providence is the working out in detail of that relation. Predestination ~~fixes~~ the gaze upon the eternal ~~destinies~~; Providence deals with the links, minute as well as vast, in the chain of events which join ~~up~~ ~~xx~~ the pre-temporal decree with the execution of the final judgment" (39).

The answer in the Shorter Catechism defines God's works of Providence as "His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions."

Calvin thought of God as being absolutely sovereign over man and the world, and held that the divine sovereignty was manifested in His oversight and guidance of man and all his works. In his thought of Providence he had no place for accident or chance. "Single acts are so regulated by God," he maintained, "and all events so proceed from His determinate counsel, that nothing happens fortuitously" (40). Equally there was no place for miracles in the ordinary sense of the term.

Fraser's thought of Providence is much the same. He too believed in the absolute sovereignty of God, and thought of that sovereignty as extending to all that happens to the world and to men. But, as with Calvin, his thought of Providence became less than satisfactory when he attempted to deal with the problem of evil. If God does not merely foresee and permit all that happens, but also ordains and appoints it then how can one escape the conclusion that He is the author of evil? As it has been put, "If no single thing happens, except by His will, then all the sin with which the world is rife must be laid at His door" (41). Calvin frankly confessed that that was a necessary conclusion from his doctrine; "God does not merely allow sin," he said, "it actually happens by His will" (42). He held that in everything God does the end is holy, and therefore God is blameless however evil the instruments and means He uses may be. "So far as it is of God to be author, mover, and impeller (of evil),

there is no guilt," he declared, "so far as it is of man, there is guilt. For He is not restrained by law, but the man is condemned by law. For what God does, He does freely, untouched by all evil affections, therefore also by sin." Fraser is no more successful in his efforts to find a completely satisfactory solution of the problem of evil, and over and over again has to take refuge in the thought of the "mere pleasure" of God's will.

Calvin and Fraser are likewise at one in their thought of Predestination. Fraser's theory of universal redemption, it is important to note, does not mean the abandonment of the Calvinistic doctrines of predestination, election and reprobation; it was something added on to those doctrines, and Fraser believed that it in no way contradicted them. Calvin's thought of predestination, it will be recalled, went beyond that of Luther and most of the great Reformers. Starting with the undeniable fact that different men react very differently to the offer of salvation in Christ, some accepting it joyfully and rejoicing in it, others rejecting it out of hand - "among a hundred to whom the same discourse is delivered, twenty, perhaps, receive it with the prompt obedience of faith; the others set no value upon it, or deride, or spurn, or abominate it" - Calvin offered an explanation by saying that all this is due to "the mere pleasure of God." To him election and reprobation were both alike manifestations of the divine activity; they were both to be traced back to

God's good pleasure, who elects some, and rejects others, irrespective of anything in them. "By predestination," he said, "we mean the eternal decree of God, by which He determined with Himself whatever He wished to happen with regard to every man" (43). "We say, then," he continued, "that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by His eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was His pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was His pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on His free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom He dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment" (44).

Calvin was insistent - as Fraser was later - that men are chosen, or rejected, not because of anything in them, but simply because it is God's pleasure to select some, and reject others; and whatever He does redounds in the end to His glory - that is its sufficient justification. His choice, or rejection, has nothing to do with foreknowledge. "Election," as Dr. Fairbairn put it, "is unconditional; there is and can be nothing in the creature which moves God to the exercise of His grace; He saves because it becomes His mercy, and He judges because it becomes His justice, though, of course, neither were possible without sin" (45). "The election of some, the reprobation of others," says Dr. James Mackinnon,

"are alike due solely to the eternal decree and predestination of God. They are not actuated by any consideration outside His omnipotent, arbitrary will and good pleasure. They are not merely a matter of Divine Prescience in the sense that He elects or rejects in accordance with what He foresees will happen. They are due solely to His eternal decree, apart from any consideration of human character and conduct" (46).

In all this Fraser was at one with Calvin and his followers. His doctrine of election and reprobation was just as high as theirs, and the distinction he draws between the elect and the reprobate just as clear. He insists that election and rejection are not based upon God's foreknowledge, but only upon His mere good pleasure. And repeatedly he declares that no man, whether he be among the elect or the reprobate, receives less than he deserves, though some, because God so chooses, receive more than they deserve. The reprobate deserve to be eternally damned, for their sins are so great that no other fate is to be expected in their case. The elect also deserve eternal damnation, for they too have sinned, and no more than the reprobate are they able of themselves to make a sufficient atonement for sin, but God in His inscrutable wisdom, and without violating His justice, chooses that they should be saved. And both the rejection of the reprobate and the salvation of the elect advance God's glory.

In all the doctrines which have been mentioned - God,



Scripture, Christ, man, salvation, providence, predestination - Fraser was at one with orthodox Calvinism. Indeed, as has already been pointed out, he was in many respects a hyper-Calvinist. And this is true not only of his beliefs with reference to the doctrines which have been dealt with in this chapter, but also of practically all his beliefs. Nothing has been said here about his teaching concerning the Church and the ministry, or the Church and its relation to the State - matters concerning which Calvin and his followers <sup>we</sup> have a great deal to say - but in these too, as the chapter devoted to his Lawfulness and Duty of Separation will have made clear, Fraser was a thoroughgoing Calvinist. Again it must be emphasised that it is only in his theory of universal redemption that he showed any marked divergence from Calvinistic teaching, and it is only where that theory is concerned that it become necessary to look beyond the Calvinism current in Scotland in the latter half of the seventeenth century to find the source or sources from which he drew his inspiration.

Note appended to this Chapter

A. Fraser and Supralapsarianism.

## NOTE A.

Fraser and Supralapsarianism

That Fraser was a high Calvinist as far as nine-tenths at least of his theology was concerned is borne out by the fact that almost all the Calvinists to whom he acknowledges his debt are to be reckoned among the supralapsarians - Twiss, for example, and Samuel Rutherford. As Professor Hastie says:- "It cannot be doubted that supralapsarianism is the logical conception of the (Calvinistic) system, the only view that saves it from dualism or the appearance of dualism, and reduces the whole order of the world and human history to its ultimate unity in God. Hence all the greatest Reformed theologians have been supralapsarians, such as Zwingli, Calvin, Beza, John Knox, and Samuel Rutherford. The difference between the supralapsarian and the infralapsarian view lies in the greater courage and thoroughness with which the former asserts the principle of predestination". (Theology of the Reformed Church, pp. 251, 252.)

## C H A P T E R   XVII

### THE MARROW OF MODERN DIVINITY, AND THE MARROW THEOLOGY

In the course of the analysis of Fraser's work reference has more than once been made to his debt to The Marrow of Modern Divinity, and to Marrow teaching generally, a debt which incidentally he frankly acknowledges. In the Memoirs, for example, he says, "I was much helped by Luther on Galatians, and Calvin's Institutions, something more by that book called The Marrow of Modern Divinity" (1). That his debt to the Marrow was generally known even before the publication of the Memoirs is clear from Boston's General Account of My Life. In the report which he gives of James Hog's examination before the committee of the Commission of the General Assembly in April 1720 Boston says, "Mr. Hog being called, the first query proposed to him was, whether he owned himself author of the preface to the last edition of The Marrow of Modern Divinity ? To which he answered affirmatively, and moreover told them, that that book, whereof he knew nothing before, came most unexpectedly to his hand, and he read it over as soon as he could; that he had no thoughts of reprinting it, but complied with the motion thereto, after the project had been laid by

others; that at the earnest desire of some who managed the business, he wrote the preface; that the Lord had blessed the reading of the book to many excellent persons of diverse ranks; and that he knew an eminent divine, then in glory (whom I judge to have been Mr. Frazer of Brea, minister at Culross), who left it in record, that the reading an old edition thereof, was the first notable means blessed of the Lord, for giving him some clearness of impression concerning the Gospel; and that for his own part he owned, that he had received more light about some important concerns of the glorious Gospel by perusing that book, than by other human writings, which Providence had brought into his hands" (2).

The Marrow of Modern Divinity was largely a compilation from the writings of Reformed and Puritan divines, such as Luther, Calvin, Beza, Lighfoot, Reynolds, Goodwin, Hall, Sibbes, Hooker and Perkins. Practically all of these are mentioned by name and with approval by Fraser, and all of them, when the Marrow first appeared in 1645, were of course 'modern.' On the title-page of the first part which was published in that year it was stated that the work touched "the covenant of works and the covenant of grace; with their use and end, both in the ~~ti~~ time of the Old Testament, and in the time of the New." In it, it was claimed, "everyone may clearly see how far forth he bringeth the law into the case of justification, and so deserveth the name of legalist; and how far forth he rejecteth the law in the case of sanctification, and so deserveth the

name of antinomist." It professed to point out "the middle path betwixt these two extremes, which by Jesus Christ leads to eternal life." The author's purpose was "to elucidate and establish the perfect freedom of the gospel salvation; to throw wide open the gates of righteousness; to lead the sinner straight to the Saviour; to introduce him as guilty, impotent, and undone; and to persuade him to grasp, without a moment's hesitation, the outstretched hand of God's mercy" (3).

The Marrow is essentially an exposition of the federal theology, having as its great aim to vindicate the doctrine of grace against the charge of legalism on the one hand and of antinomianism on the other. No work has ever been written in which that doctrine has received clearer, or more convincing exposition. As C.G. M'Crie says, "The real, abiding, and imperishable value of the book is to be found in this, that it is an English embodiment of the Federal idea of Revelation; that scheme of Systematic Theology which conceives of God's relation to mankind under the form of a series of Covenants. The Federal system of Theology originated with the Reformers; it was largely followed by seventeenth century theologians on the Continent, and it found fullest logical expression in the works of Cocce<sup>i</sup>gus" (4).

The idea of the two covenants may be traced back to Calvin's Institutes. It was outlined by Bullinger, Zwingli's successor at Zurich. It was developed by Alaseo, the minister of the Frisian congregation of the Reformed Church



in London in the time of Edward VI. It found its way into Scotland at the time of the Scottish Reformation and received clear theological expression there before the close of the sixteenth century in the writings of Robert Rollock, the first Principal of the University of Edinburgh. The Puritans accepted it whole-heartedly, and in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and in the Shorter Catechism, and the Larger, it received prominent and permanent expression. It was the familiar commonplace of the whole Covenanting period.

The Marrow gives a popular treatment of the Federal Theology, dealing in particular with the question, To whom and on what conditions or terms is salvation offered? The older divines held that the Gospel benefits were for the elect and for them alone. But the Marrow held that all sinners have a real right to Christ. God made a deed of gift and grant to all men of His Son Jesus Christ. This gift of God is to be received by men; it is not something which they can win for themselves by their works or their obedience to the law. "In the covenant of grace," Evangelista, the minister of the Gospel, is made to say, "there is not any condition or law to be performed on man's part by himself; no, there is no more for him to do, but only to know and believe that Christ hath done all for him .... Here ye are to work nothing, here ye are to do nothing, here ye are to render nothing unto God, but only to receive the treasure, which is Jesus Christ, and apprehend Him in your heart by faith .... Wherefore, as

Paul and Silas said to the jailor, so say I unto you, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved': that is, be verily persuaded in your heart that Jesus Christ is yours, and that you shall have life and salvation by Him, that whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, He did it for you."

The object of the Marrow was to clear away the barriers which are so often raised between the sinner and Christ, in the shape of certain conditions, such as repentance, or some degree of outward or inward reformation, and to present him immediately with the words, 'Whosoever will, let him <sup>c</sup>come,' assured that in heartily receiving Christ full repentance and a new life will follow. It was a protest against all forms of legalism, whether of the old description or of the new; the system of Neonomianism, as it was called, which changed the Gospel into a modified and easier kind of law, was subjected to criticism as rigorous and as forceful as that aimed at the theology which has for its foundation the covenant of works. It was a plea, and in view of the tendencies of the time not altogether an unnecessary one, for a revival of clearer and fuller Gospel preaching and teaching.

The work was full of paradoxes and statements which, to say the least, were open to misinterpretation. "A believer doth not commit sin," it roundly declared; "The Lord is not angry with a believer for his sins;" "No, assure yourself that your God in Christ will never un-son you, nor yet as touching your eternal salvation will He love you even a whit

the less though you commit never so many and great sins; for this is certain, that as no good in you did move Him to justify you and give you eternal life, so no evil in you can move Him to take it away being once given." But in spite of these extreme statements its message was one which many soon realised to be true to Scripture. Its teaching still finds wide acceptance in the form of such hymns as Charlotte Elliott's "Just as I am" :-

"Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come,"

or Toplady's "Rock of Ages" :-

"Not the labours of my hands  
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears for ever flow,  
All for sin could not atone:  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

As Dr. C.G. M'CRie points out, "We may have learned to walk in the middle path of Christian privilege and practice with a freer step than Evangelists enjoined and Neophytus attained, no longer painfully picking our way between No-Law on the one side and New Law on the other, nor needing rows of palisades

to guard us at every step from falling into extremes. And yet the theology of the Marrow is essentially that of the Halls, the Romaines, the Newtons, and the Spurgeons of England, and of our Scottish Leightons, M'Cheynes, and Chalmerses, our Bonars and our Somervilles. For its leading principles may be stated in four words - Full Atonement, : Free Salvation. On these two pillars, like the Jachin and Boaz of Solomon's temple, was the whole structure built and established. And so the Marrow theology will survive all the changing fashions of successive centuries; as with the 'thing of beauty' in the vision of Keats, 'it will never pass into nothingness' (5). The Marrow being, in the words of a modern writer, "the conscientious attempt of a conscientious man to find a middle way to the Kingdom of God betwixt extreme theological liberty and extreme theological legality," (6), it continues to hold a place as a reasonable though somewhat one-sided presentation of the Gospel message.

Fraser's debt to this book, and in particular to its exposition of the Federal Theology, is evident in all he wrote. There are passages in his books which are almost word for word identical with portions of the Marrow. Take, for example, this passage from the memoirs :- "Heaven comes by grace, by Christ's blood, and not by works; works are not your title to glory. 'No law music in heaven,' saith Rutherford, 'no, worthy is the Lamb.' Look not to what thou hast done, but to what Christ hath done; ye neither share in whole nor

in part with Christ: good works are mentioned, not to buy or purchase glory by, but to evidence an interest in Christ and sincerity in grace; if there be as much as will evidence sincerity there is enough. The least gold is gold as well as the greatest piece" (7). Or this from the same book :- "In making faith or any work in us the foundation of my comfort, rather than the free, full, and immutable promise and goodwill of God in Christ; and in making the foundation of duty to be rather from our covenant with God, or our part in it, than from the Lord's covenant with us, and His part of it .... hath a long time kept me unsettled and wavering" (8).

In the First Faith Treatise we find him writing this :- "Some modern divines tell us that faith consists of many acts, and that a sinner is not justified by faith only, as it is commonly taken; and in its metaphysical application; but likewise by repentance, love, and new obedience, tho' imperfect, yet sincere; which they say, have the same influence on our justification as faith hath, and is formally included in the conception of faith; and therefore, that faith doth not justify us instrumentally, but conditionally; and that the difference betwixt the first covenant of works, and the second of grace is, that the first covenant did require perfect obedience as the condition of life, and the second is satisfied with sincere obedience: this last notion of faith I most dislike of any; and if I mistake not, is of most dangerous consequence, and tends to the overthrow of the Gospel, and the introducing of



another covenant of works, tho' not perfect works, and of laying a foundation of boasting in ourselves, and making Christ and His righteousness in vain, and expressly contrary to the strain of Scripture, and scope thereof; especially in the Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Galatians, of which we may yet speak at greater length, God willing" (9).

Again in the same Treatise when dealing with the proper subject of faith, whether the understanding or the will, he says, "That which presses me most to affirm faith to be in the understanding, is that hereby we are less liable to run to a covenant of works: for all acts of the will look something like doing, and give something as it were, which the understanding doth not, but is passive, and made to elicit its acts from the evidence of the object, and so furnishes less grounds for boasting, and more formally gives glory to God" (10).

In the earlier part of the Second Treatise he has a fairly lengthy passage in which he deals with those who look to their own merits for salvation ~~the~~ rather than to Christ. He clearly distinguishes between the covenant of works and that of grace, and in almost every sentence there are echoes of the Marrow theology. The passage is too long to quote in full, but some sentences from it may be given. "Scripture," he says, "mentions no other way of justification than by faith alone without the works of the Law .... Scripture mentions no other thing than the merits of Christ received by faith as that which doth federally entitle us to everlasting

life .... The opposition is betwixt faith and works, betwixt doing and believing; it is not betwixt perfect doing and sincere doing, nor betwixt doing with faith or in faith and doing without faith, nor betwixt doing in our own strength and doing by the power of God, <sup>but</sup> ~~and~~ simply betwixt doing and believing .... To make works, sincere obedience, or anything done by us, as done by us, or as a work, the partial condition of life, is to fill the hearts and souls of believers with endless sorrows and confusions, if not to take away their consolations altogether, and to plunge them in despair" (11).

A few pages further on in the same Treatise he says:  
"The doctrine of free grace and justification by Christ alone without the works of the Law did shine clearly, not only in this Land, but in all the Churches of Christ in Europe, sometime after the light did arise, and the Popish clouds of error were scattered; and then did men live both holily and comfortably, and it was well with us: but this truth was not received in love, Scotland was unthankful, and did not improve this prize that was in her hand, was not thankful for, nor did prize so welcome news and so precious a treasure, but turned secure: therefore hath the Lord raised up Antinomians and Arminians who on the one and other side assault and rend this truth; and that light that shined on our ways is now in a great measure removed, and little or small vestiges shall ye find in many sermons and written books, except what a man shall find in Mr. Owen: Oh ! mourn for these things, your contempt of grace,

and turn you to the good old paths; look to Calvin, Luther, Bradford, Tindal, Mr. Patrick Hamilton, Mr. Bruce, and in their writings see this truth more clearly shining, than in our modern writers, if it be not Rutherford and Mr. Shepherd" (12).

Finally, in one of the most interesting and revealing chapters in his Memoirs, that in which he speaks at considerable length about his call to the ministry, and the manner in which it was made clear to him, he says, "Divers and various conflicts I had with unbelief, and much exercised with the law and the bond-woman seeking to get in my conscience. I was much helped by Luther on the Galatians, and Calvin's Institutions; ~~and~~ something more by that book called The Marrow of Modern Divinity; by some old writers, as Fox, Bradwardin's Letters, Mr. Hamilton, and Wisheart; but especially by reading the Epistle to the Romans, by prayer and meditation, by which I came to receive very much satisfaction in my mind in the Gospel. I perceived that our divinity was much altered from what it was in the primitive reformers' time. When I read Knox, Hamilton, Tindal, Luther, Calvin, Bradford, etc., I thought I saw another scheme of divinity, much more agreeable to the Scriptures and to my experience than the modern. And though I plainly enough saw the errors of the Antinomians (for their errors lay very near truth), yet I perceived a gospel spirit to be in very few, and that the most part yea of ministers did wofully confound the two covenants, and were of an Old Testament spirit; and little of the glory of Christ, grace and gospel, did shine in

their writings and preaching. But I abhorred and was at enmity with Mr. Baxter, as a stated enemy to the grace of God, under cover of opposing some Antinomianism. He boldly averred what others thought and materially believed, even whilst they did speak against him; by which he was hardened in his way" (13).

For his theology in general Fraser was greatly indebted to the Marrow; but his universalism also had its roots there. It will be remembered that during the Marrow controversy in the earlier part of the eighteenth century one of the charges brought against the Marrowmen was that they taught universal redemption. They were charged with holding that it is part of the direct act of faith to believe that "Christ died for me, and what He did and suffered He did and suffered for me." Their opponents held that this could only mean that Christ died for every man, and that it was, in fact, a part of saving faith to believe that. Principal Hadow asked, "How can ministers of the Gospel tell every man, as the truth of God, that Christ is dead for him, without the supposition of an universal redemption ? .... The author's opinion clearly is that there is this general warrant, and that particular application thereof is made by the sinner's believing, or being verily persuaded, that it doth belong particularly to himself" (14).

During the course of the controversy the committee appointed by the Assembly for preserving the purity of doctrine

within the Church examined the Marrow and found in it what they regarded as five particular heresies :- Assurance is of the nature of faith; the Atonement is universal; holiness is not necessary to salvation; the fear of punishment and the hope of reward are not allowed as the motives of a believer's obedience; and, the believer is not under the law as a rule of life. And the General Assembly of 1720 passed an "Act concerning a book entitled The Marrow of Modern Divinity." In that Act the teaching of certain passages on five heads of doctrine - detailed above - was declared to be contrary to the Holy Scriptures, the Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms. One of the heresies, it is to be noted, was that "the Atonement is universal."

There were undoubtedly grounds for this charge brought against the Marrowmen. They dwelt much upon the love of God for the whole world, and the offer of Christ to every sinner. As Dr. C.G. M'Crrie says, "They delighted in proclaiming - using a formula which Culverwell coined and to which E.F. gave wide circulation - that God the Father, moved by nothing but His free love to mankind lost, hath made a deed of gift and grant unto all men of His Son Jesus Christ. According to them the legatees under Christ's testament are not believers only, although in their case only does the testament become effectual; the legatees are sinners of mankind universally and indefinitely, and every sinner of mankind is entitled and encouraged to put in and act upon his claim. Their desire to bring the gospel near to human souls and to put no limit to the offer of



salvation enabled the Marrow theologians to avoid the narrowness and hardness which the Federal scheme of theology is apt to generate - a narrowness of exclusion which hampered their opponents with what has been fitly termed the 'Judaic theory of the world's conversion.' Believing the gospel offer was for all, that to mankind sinners the call and overture of divine love are to be addressed, the moderate Calvinists of the eighteenth century were animated and dominated by the missionary spirit of Christianity. While they were particular redemptionists and disclaimed all sympathy with the tenet of universal redemption, 'they were able to see that Calvinistic doctrine was not inconsistent with world-conquering aspirations and efforts'" (15).

That the Marrowmen, in spite of the phraseology which they were in the habit of using, were particular redemptionists is beyond dispute. While desiring to bring the Gospel near to every human soul, and to enter fully into the missionary spirit of the New Testament, they more thoroughly identified Christ and His elect than the theologians who preceded them. In his pamphlet, An Explication of Passages Excepted Against in the Marrow of Modern Divinity, published in 1718, James Hog pointed out that the author of the Marrow was taxed with asserting universal redemption as to purchase - "Go and tell every man without exception that here is good news for him, Christ is dead for him." His reply to this charge was that in the Marrow there are proper conditions attached to this

universal offer - "if he will take Him and accept of His righteousness" - and that the commission is, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature." He held that assertions of particular redemption are to be found in the Marrow, and must be taken along with those that proclaim, or seem to proclaim, universal redemption. When the Commission of Assembly asked the Marrowmen for an explanation of what they meant when they used the expression, "deed of gift and grant to sinners of mankind," their reply was that "by the deed of gift or grant we understand no more than the revelation of the divine will in the word, affording warrant to offer Christ to all, and a warrant to all to receive; for although we believe the purchase and application of redemption to be peculiar to the elect, who were given to Christ by the Father in the counsel of peace, yet the warrant to receive Him is common to all."

Boston believed in particular redemption, and was convinced that the Marrow taught no other doctrine. His notes in the 1726 edition of the book are sufficient proof of this. "Our Lord Jesus Christ," he says, "died not for, nor took upon Him the sins of all and every individual man, but He died for, and took upon Him the sins of all the elect" (16). When Fisher makes ~~Evangelists~~ say, "God the Father as He is in His Son Jesus Christ, moved with nothing but with His free love to mankind lost hath made a deed of gift and grant unto them all, that whoseover of them all shall believe in this His Son shall not perish but have eternal life," Boston adds the note:

"This is the good old way of discovering to sinners their warrant to believe in Christ; and it doth indeed bear the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ for all, and that Christ crucified is the ordinance of God for salvation unto all mankind, in the use-making of which only they can be saved; but not an universal atonement or redemption" (17). When Evangelista says, "I tell you truly that whatsoever a man is, or whatsoever he hath done or not done, he hath warrant enough to come unto Christ, by believing, if he can," Boston comments, "It is not in vain added, 'If he can.' For there is in this matter a great difference betwixt what a sinner may do in point of warrant, and what he will or can do in point of the event" (18). The truth is that Boston and the Marrowmen as a whole were quite definitely against the doctrine of universal redemption. As the Rev. D. Beaton has pointed out, "whatever objection may be found with the Marrowmen's mode of expression - and here it must be said that their terms were not of the happiest kind - it is evident from their writings that they were firm believers in the doctrine of a definite atonement, and it could be as easily shown that, while steering clear of Arminianism, they managed no less successfully to steer clear of Amyraldism" (19). Mr Beaton goes on to say, "It is to be candidly admitted, of course, that in after years by a process of development the Marrow theology on this point drifted into what was known in the Scottish Secession Churches as the Double Reference Theory of the Atonement and gave rise to the

## Atonement Controversy."

As far as this controversy concerns Fraser's theology the point to note is that the teaching of the Marrow was such that it could with a considerable amount of justification be maintained that it included a theory of universal redemption. And there is no doubt whatsoever that Fraser was indebted to it for a good deal of his teaching on this point; even the language he uses when propounding his theory is strongly reminiscent of the Marrow. Many passages from the latter might be quoted in support of this contention, but I think it will be sufficient if I give what is perhaps the Marrow's most outspoken statement on the side of universal redemption. To Neophytus's question, "Hath such an one as I am warrant to believe in Christ?" Evangelista replies, "I beseech you consider that God the Father as He is in His Son Jesus Christ, moved with nothing but with His free love to mankind lost hath made a deed of gift and grant unto them all, that whosoever of them all shall believe in this His Son shall not perish but have eternal life. And hence it was that Jesus Christ Himself said unto His disciples, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,' that is, go and tell every man without exception that here are good news for him, Christ is dead for him, and if he will take Him and accept of His righteousness he shall have Him. Therefore saith a godly writer, forasmuch as the Holy Scripture speaketh to all in general none of us ought to distrust himself, but believe



that it doth belong particularly to himself.

"And to the end that this point, wherein lieth and consisteth the whole mystery of our holy faith, may be understood the better, let us put the case that some good and holy king should cause a proclamation to be made through his whole kingdom by the sound of a trumpet that all rebels and banished men shall safely return home to their houses, because that, at the suit and desert of some dear friend of theirs, it hath pleased the king to pardon them. Certainly none of these rebels ought to doubt but that he shall obtain true pardon for his rebellion, and so return home and live under the shadow of that gracious king. Even so our good King and Lord of heaven and earth hath, for the obedience and desert of our good Brother Jesus Christ, pardoned us all our sins, and made a proclamation throughout the whole world that every one of us may safely return to God in Jesus Christ" (20).

That passage finds an echo in page after page of Fraser's writings. At the same time it is, I think, quite obvious that to find the real source of his theory of universal redemption we must look further afield than the Marrow, and this I propose to do in the two chapters which follow.

#### Notes appended to this Chapter

- A. The Marrow and Universalism.
- B. Fraser and Richard Baxter.



## NOTE A.

The Marrow and Universalism

Principal John MacLeod suggests that it may have been Fraser's known connection with the Marrowmen which led to the charge of universalism brought against the letter. "There is a suggestion that one might make in regard to the Assembly's condemnation of the Marrow on the ground alleged that it taught Universal Redemption. Culross, where James Fraser laboured in his latter years, is on the very border of the county and within the bounds of the Synod of Fife, and it may have been known by Principal Hadow, who of course lived in that county and Synod, that Fraser had taught a doctrine of Universal Redemption so that he might conclude that those who were of his circle, as some of the Marrowmen were, shared in the taint of the same error. He learned this about Fraser from Allen Logan of Culross who was a keen Anti-Marrowman. He might have known it too from John Carstairs' criticism of him in this score as far back at 1677. For even so early his peculiar views were known. This could be no more than a surmise; for neither Boston nor the Erskines gave any reason for suspecting that they were off the orthodox lines on this subject. Indeed the Marrowmen expressly disclaimed the teaching of Universal Redemption. The condemnation, however, of the Marrow because of its alleged teaching on this head may be due entirely to an inference from the words it employs when it says to the Gospel hearer as such, 'Christ is dead

for you.' The Marrowmen as a class were as clear in regard to a definite and efficacious Atonement as any Scottish Divines of their age could well be. To say anything to the contrary would be to misunderstand or mis-state their teaching altogether." (Theology in the Early Days of the Secession, Records of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., vol.viii, part i, p.9).

## NOTE B.

Fraser and Richard Baxter

Fraser's extraordinary animus against Richard Baxter requires a word of explanation. In this attitude to one for whom he might have been expected to have had a considerable regard one finds another indication of Fraser's leaning to Marrow theology. Fraser held that if Antinomianism was an error at all it was one which "lay very near the truth." Baxter, on the other hand, was so set upon preaching and pressing home the absolute necessity of a holy life, that he seemed to some to lay far too little weight on the sovereign grace of God, and on the imputed righteousness of Christ. Fraser went so far as to call him a stated enemy to the grace of God, and declared openly that he abhorred him and was at enmity with him. (Cf. Whyte, James Fraser, Laird of Brea, pp. 96,97; M'Nair, Scots Theology in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 113,114.)

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ARMINIAN UNIVERSALISM

As it is Fraser's theory of universal redemption, rather than his theology in general, with which we are particularly concerned here it is obvious that we must look beyond orthodox Calvinism and the Marrow theology for the sources of his teaching. And here we discover that his critics, especially those of his own time, were almost unanimous in regarding him as an Arminian and his theory as only thinly disguised Arminian universalism. It will be remembered that even before he received licence to preach his orthodoxy had been called in question. Many had strong suspicions that he was inclined to Arminianism because he expressed himself favourable to universal redemption. His answer to that charge, when it was definitely brought against him, was that he abhorred Arminianism in all its branches, and that as to universal redemption, although in a certain sense he maintained a common redemption, yet he acknowledged a special redemption in which none but the elect had interest. (Cf. Chapter IV.)

These suspicions, however, continued to grow. Alexander Brodie, in his Diary for 5th September, 1677 - five years after

Fraser's ordination - makes this entry :- "I heard that there was much stir about James Fraser of Brey, and that he was thought to incline to Arminianism in some things" (1). And by the time his works began to appear in print - long after his death - many were quite convinced that he was to all intents and purposes an Arminian. As late as last century the historian of the Reformed Presbyterian Church repeated the charge.

Writing of Fraser he said: "In some respects he was so singularly constituted that, holding extreme Calvinistic views on other points, he labours in the work .... A Treatise on Justifying Faith, to establish a theory of Universal Atonement. It is essentially the old Arminianism, but it is presented by Fraser in a new form, and with some startling additions" (2).

What exactly was the Arminian teaching with regard to the Atonement? It will be as well to attempt to answer this question before coming to any decision with regard to Fraser's debt to Arminianism.

Arminianism, it has to be kept in mind, was a revolt against certain aspects of Calvinism, in particular against the rigidity of the Calvinistic idea of the Divine decrees, and the supralapsarian views of some of the more extreme Calvinists. Arminius, a professor of theology at Leyden, where these extreme supralapsarian views were prevalent, and at one time an ardent supporter of high Calvinism, came to believe that such views did less than justice to God and His love. Something like a new conversion, it has been said, took place

in him. "He clearly perceived that the doctrine of the absolute decrees involved God as the author of sin; that it unworthily restrained His grace; and, leaving myriads without hope, condemned them for believing that for them there was no salvation either intended or provided in Christ. He saw, moreover, that it gave to those who believed themselves to be the elect a false security based upon no sufficient ethical principle" (2a). As a result of his reflection Arminius built up those theological principles, antagonistic to extreme Calvinism, which have ever since been associated with his name.

As a creed Arminianism was set forth in the Five Articles of the Remonstrance addressed in 1610 to the States-General of Holland and West Friesland. The first of these asserted conditional election, or election based upon the foreknowledge of God with regard to the faith of the elect and the unbelief of the reprobate. The second asserted universal atonement in the sense that it is intended, although not actually efficacious, for all. The third asserted the inability of man to exercise saving faith, or to accomplish anything really good without regeneration by the Holy Spirit. The fourth asserted that while the grace of God is indispensable in every step of the spiritual life it is not irresistible. And the fifth asserted that the grace of the Holy Spirit is sufficient for continual victory over temptation and sin; but the necessity of the final perseverance of all believers is left doubtful.



The leading principles of Arminianism were:- (a) the universality of the benefit of the atonement, and (b) a restored freedom of the human will as an element in the Divine decrees and in opposition to the assertion of the absolute sovereignty of God. In these two directions "its specific contribution was of sufficient importance to rank it amongst the few really outstanding and permanent developments in theological thought" (2a). It joined issue with Calvinism at several points.

The first of these was in the matter of predestination. Calvinism held predestination to be absolute and unconditional, the decree to elect being without foresight of faith or of good works; and similarly the decree to reprobation was not conditioned by any specific demerit of the reprobate. No ethical difference could be seen between elect and reprobate. Over against this Arminianism held that election and reprobation were moral, and dependent upon the Divine foreknowledge; God elects to salvation or reprobation only those whose faith or final unbelief He foresees.

Then where the Atonement was concerned Calvinism knew nothing of anything except a limited atonement, an atonement confined to the elect and to them alone, and for them its efficacy was regarded as absolute so that they could not fail to be saved. Against this Arminianism held that atonement is universal, of infinite value, designed for all, accomplished for all, rendering the salvation of all men possible, the

result being in every case conditioned by faith. Christ died for all, but only believers were to receive the benefit of His death.

With regard to the doctrine of total depravity, where Calvinism held this to involve the complete bondage of the will and man's utter inability to do any spiritual good, refusing to make any distinction between imputed guilt and inherent depravity, Arminianism held that depravity is a bias, which leaves the will free, and man responsible for his own destiny through the choice of faith or unbelief. A clear distinction was made between actual and original sin, and it was denied that the sin of Adam was imputed to his posterity in the sense of their being guilty of, and chargeable with that sin.

As for conversion, while the Calvinists and the Arminians alike ascribed this to the Holy Spirit the former maintained that the grace of God is irresistible while the latter held that it may finally be resisted. And with reference to final perseverance, while the Calvinists insisted upon the indefectibility of the saints the Arminians declared the possibility of a true believer falling from grace.

The main element in the Arminian objection to Calvinism was the deep and almost universal dissatisfaction with the declaration and issues of a limited Atonement. Over against the unconditional election and the irresistible grace of the reigning Calvinism Arminius and his followers affirmed

conditional election and man's freedom to accept or reject divine overtures. They accepted the thought of the unity of the race in Adam, but refused to regard the connection between Adam and his posterity as of such a nature as to make the first sinful act of the progenitor of the race a common act of mankind thereby justifying the imputation of original sin as truly and properly sin. They believed that sufficient grace and faith are conferred upon all, and that therefore the difference between the saved and the lost is referable ultimately to the human will. They maintained that God from all eternity determined to bestow salvation on those whom He foresaw would persevere unto the end, and to inflict everlasting punishments on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist His divine succours; so that election was conditional and reprobation in like manner the result of foreseen infidelity and persevering wickedness. They were convinced that the Lord Jesus Christ by His sufferings and death made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; that, however, none but <sup>who</sup> those/believed in Him could be partakers of divine benefits.

Such in very brief outline are the main tenets of Arminianism where predestination, election and atonement are concerned. This was the "heresy" with which Fraser was charged by many of his contemporaries, and also by many critics since that time.

How did Fraser regard Arminian teaching ? There is no uncertainty about that; over and over again in almost every one of his works he expresses his dislike of the system.

In his Lawfulness and Duty of Separation, for example, one of the charges which he brings against the cures, and one of the reasons why he urges his countrymen to cease attending their ministrations, is that "Popery is not yet ripe enough to bring in: yet are some points of Arminianism preached, and the doctrine of predestination, under pretence of its mysteriousness, is discharged" (3).

Again, in the First Faith Treatise, when dealing with what faith is not, he says that "faith is not, as Arminians contend, the believing of this proposition 'Christ died for all,' as I shall prove, when I come to speak of the object of faith."

(4). Later on in the same Treatise, and again when dealing with defective views of the nature of faith, he says, "Arminians make the principle object of faith to be this proposition: 'Christ died for all, or for me in particular'"(5). And again: "All Papists, Arminians, Lutherans, and many profane, ignorant and godless wretches believe most confidently that Christ died for them; and yet all these who do so are not saved" (6). Referring to the man who comes to Christ that he may win the victory over certain sins which pain his conscience he says of him that he "like a rotten Papist and deluded Arminian runs still in a covenant of works, and thereby destroys and makes void the Gospel" (7).

Throughout this First Treatise Fraser has many hits at Arminians. He differs from them, to cite a further instance, in the matter of free-will. In defending his contention that faith is the gift of God he points out that his argument can be used to confute "Arminians, Quakers and Papists, who maintain indeed, that man of himself can do nothing, but that at certain seasons, when the person is well disposed, say Arminians and Papists, where the light breaks out, say Quakers, through a new power given and maintained by Christ, which they call universal and sufficient grace, a man having sufficient means, may come to Christ, if he will, on Christ's call, and which call they may likewise resist. And these in words do acknowledge all to proceed from the grace of God, and 'tis much in their mouths; but they give but goodly words, and resolve all in man's free will, which after all is done, determines by refusing or accepting, and so it should be of him that willeth or runneth; then, both to will and to do were not of God, then, we make ourselves to differ. What an hypocritical complimenting of God was it in him, who said, That the doctrine of free-will did ascribe more to God's grace than the other, seeing this was the greatest act of favour and grace that could be shown, to honour man so far as to entrust him with the carving out of his own destiny: but His glory He will not give to another. If Christ hath undertaken Himself to do it, and to be answerable to the Father for His elect; we must not think that He will commit it to the creatures's free-will,



or leave it at such an uncertainty: no, no, 'tis not of a man, or of the will of man they are born, God giveth the new heart, which can no more resist, than the old heart of stone can yield" (8).

It is, however, in the Second Treatise that Fraser deals most often and most directly with Arminianism, and always in order to emphasise his abhorrence of it. With reference to the distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace he says: "The spirit of pride, disdainng to submit to the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish its own righteousness, hath put out Papists, Arminians, and others to oppose this doctrine" - salvation through Christ's merits alone - "and to set up free-will which goes hand in hand with this legal way" (9).

Of the reality and genuineness of Christ's pity he writes:- "Christ doth really pity such as are given up to their hearts' lusts and punished for their sins .... When Christ weeped over Jerusalem it was no dissimulation, they were no crocodile tears He shed, as Arminians slender us to say, and would infer from our principles; for this weeping and these tears did really express the tender and compassionate nature of Christ" (10).

Turning to God's general goodwill to men, he says: "See how far we are wronged by Arminians, free-willers and other proud enemies to the grace of God, who by reason of an absolute decree of God particularly and effectually determining all the creatures' actions which we maintain, do therefore, slandering

us, father upon us that we think and hold that God's commands, complaints, exhortations to be but illusions and fancies, traps, snares and dissimulations" (11). A few pages further on, and still dealing with the same subject, he writes: "Do not hence conclude any subjective grace or self-determining principle in man to what is good, whether implanted in his nature as Pelagians think, or assistant and concomitant grace proceeding from Christ's merit yet so as to enable the man if he will, yet still so as the man's will determines all, as Jesuits and Arminians suppose" (12).

When he comes to deal with the theory, which he believes to be true, that the promises and gifts of God are really intended for all, reprobates as well as believers, he says: "See hence the reality and sincerity of the Gospel, whereby all privileges are holden out, and we commanded to believe them. Arminians and enemies slander us with this, that we make the offer of the Gospel a trap and snare, as if there were no ingenuity in it: we offer a pardon in which they never were contained (say they), a price to redeem and save them which was never laid out for them, a purse to enrich them in which yet there is not one penny money for them, and I wish some had not given too good ground for such a calumny; verily did the Lord call any to receive that which was never theirs, and in which they had no interest or concern, then were it inconceivable how the upright Lord, for ought I can see, can offer a general pardon to any, which yet really in itself is

adstricted to some particular persons, and not at all to them, or would promise them that by laying hold on such a pardon, no ways reaching them, they should by virtue thereof be received into favour" (13).

In the fifth chapter of this Treatise, where it will be remembered he deals particularly with the death of Christ as the most solid ground of justifying faith, he has a passage in which he takes up the challenge of Arminianism and conditionalism. Some, he says, may raise this objection to his position: "If Christ's death be a ground of faith, then as it is the duty of all within the visible Church to believe, so likewise must they believe that Christ died for them seeing their faith is built upon this, or that the death of Christ for them is the foundation of their faith; and if all must believe this, then will it follow undeniably that Christ died for all within the visible Church, seeing verity is always the object of formal faith." "For answer," he proceeds, "I confess here is a marvellous great strait to which I find the best, godliest and most learned divines driven, and from which I see not how they extricate themselves: the Arminian universal redemption is so justly odious to a pious soul, and a lover of the grace of God; and the conditional redemption a middle path in which some walk, so unreasonable and little satisfactory, that they which love the truth stand at a great distance with anything that looks like universal grace, universal love and the like, and therefore maintain no universal redemption at all: the

most of whose arguments against both Arminians and conditionalists I judge unanswerable: yet I find them so gruelled on the other hand with some express testimonies of Scripture, and especially with the call to reprobates to believe, which is universal, that as they are put to some bold glosses upon God's word to evade its strength, so do the most ingenuous and as I think the most conscientious and learned of them profess sincerely that the difficulties and knots arising from the Lord's call to reprobates to believe on a crucified Saviour, who yet according to them never died for any but the elect, are so great that they cannot get overcome and loosed, and therefore profess it a mystery unsearchable; others, it is true, as I truly think, because but superficially acquainted with the controversy, and never deeply wading therein, seem to make no difficulty therein at all, and therefore answer roundly, according to their several conceptions, to the objection which in the next section we shall examine and consider" (14). As he indicates he deals at greater length in the section which follows with this whole question.

In the concluding passage of this same chapter he returns to the quarrel he has with Arminian universalism. "Some others," he says, ".... being convinced that salvation is offered to reprobates through Christ's blood, and that whatever they be, all are obliged to receive the offer and rest on it for salvation, and yet judging it hard and dangerous to affirm with Arminians that Christ died equally for all, and



unreasonable to affirm He died conditionally, do yet find a necessity both from express testimony of Scripture to grant that reprobates are some way interested in Christ's death, and more than devils are, and that however Christ died not for them efficaciously, and as He died for the elect, yet He died sufficiently for them, so as salvation is warrantably offered through His blood, and that this city of refuge as it is set up for them to fly into, so have they legal access to fly thereinto, and is so sufficient for them, that if they believe (which yet I grant they cannot, and will not) they should undoubtedly be saved through Christ's death and sufferings. This method of answering the difficulty (proposed by Arminians and Papists) I close with as most satisfying, and consonant to the Scriptures, and therefore shall, God willing, dilate a little further on this head for the better and fuller clearing of the same" (15). It will be remembered that it is at this point that he inserts his Appendix concerning Christ's Death.

It is in this Appendix, of course, that his theory is most clearly displayed, and it is here too that his position approximates most nearly to that of Arminians. He is conscious of this, and acknowledges that Arminians have indeed laid hold of a certain truth which more orthodox systems have tended to ignore. "Though I abhor Arminianism and the opinion of equal eternal good-will to all men," he says, "whether elect or reprobate; yet it may be said that <sup>the</sup> world



meant, II Cor. i.19, which God was reconciling, is the world largely taken, comprehending all and every one of mankind, and not the elect world only; and that God in the covenant of redemption by sending His Son to die for mankind, did lay a sufficient foundation and ground for reconciliation of the whole world; for it cannot be meant of actual formal reconciliation; for the elect were not actually reconciled to God by Christ before the foundation of the world was laid" (16).

But he is at pains to assert that he is not at one with Arminians; he ranges himself with the orthodox divines, and his theory, he insists, is not inconsistent with what these latter hold and teach. If there are any who say that "Durham and Mr. Rutherford are for particular redemption and against Arminian and conditional redemption, so am I too," he declares (17). He stoutly denies that by his theory he "did thereby state myself as an adversary to such as are for a particular redemption of the elect only, and did side with these who maintain the universal equal extent of Christ's death, homologating the doctrine of Papists, Arminians and other adversaries of the grace of God, to whose principles I have the greatest aversion and increasing more and more as the Lord opens and makes His ways and mysteries of grace known to me, seeing likewise I do ingenuously profess that I strike in and go alongst with these who maintain a particular redemption of the elect only, in which none but themselves have interest. I am at one work with them."

A final passage from the Appendix - "If any think," he says, "that by asserting such an universal redemption, proving it by arguments and loosing of the objections made against it, the same for the most part which are used against Arminians, I strengthen thereby the hands of the adversary, and weaken the hands of such as are for the truth, let them consider that there is no argument I bring for this universal redemption that will be of any avail to prove the Arminian redemption; and as for my answers to objections, there is no Arminian that dare, unless he would cut the throat of his own cause, make use of them: so that Arminians are never a whit helped by me, but the true orthodox opinion of special redemption further (I shall not say better) explained and cleared; there is nothing derogatory to the grace, love, wisdom, or sovereignty of God, nothing that advances the great Diana of free-will (the life and soul of Arminianism) that can be deduced from anything herein asserted" (18).

In these passages from his Treatises Fraser makes it quite clear that he believes that there is a vital distinction between the universalism which he teaches and that maintained by Arminians. It is also worth noting that when his Second Treatise was published in 1749 the editor was just as convinced that the theory which it contained was distinct from Arminianism. In his Epistle to the Reader, when he comes to deal with Fraser's theory with regard to the extent of Christ's death, he speaks of this particular subject as

one in which "many have wandered as in the dark, many various and odious opinions have been vented about it, that instead of laying a sure foundation and warrant for faith, hath loosed all grips for true and saving faith to fix upon, and opened a flood-gate of dangerous and pernicious errors, so that multitudes are drowned in everlasting perdition, by blind guides, whose errors this worthy author hath laid down before you, as so many objections against the true grounds of faith, and hath answered, and clearly unfolded the danger of the same, and leading as it were a middle path betwixt two extreme dangers, so that the candid reader through the blessing of God may be saved from splitting upon the rocks of Arminian~~is~~ and Popish errors on the one side, and the right-hand extremes that many divines in former periods have gone into, who were esteemed orthodox concerning the extent of Christ's death; and how necessary such a piece of excellent divinity is at this day is evident to those who see but with one eye; how rampant Arminian principles are raging in these isles of Britain and Ireland, is known in the sad experience of many. 'How is our fine gold become dim ! how is the most fine gold changed !'" (19).

To sum up, Fraser undoubtedly went beyond the Calvinistic position as far as predestination, election and atonement are concerned. He regarded the views current in his day in these matters as too rigid, and too limited, and not wholly true to Scripture. On the other hand it is equally clear

that whatever he may have owed to Arminianism, and that he did owe something to it is undeniable, he was not prepared to go all the way with those who held that system. He maintained that there was a common redemption, but not a universal redemption as the Arminians believed and taught; and he insisted that this distinction between common and universal is vital. A common redemption in his view left room for a special redemption in which none but the elect have a share, while a universal redemption sets both elect and reprobate upon the same level.

Fraser sought to occupy a position midway between the two extremes of rigid Calvinism on the one hand, and Arminian universalism on the other. In this he can hardly be said to have been particularly successful for his system has many of the weaknesses of the Calvinism current in Scotland in the late seventeenth century, and at the same time it lays itself open to almost all the objections which can pertinently be raised to Arminianism.

Note appended to this Chapter

A. Fraser and Arminianism.

## NOTE A.

Fraser and Arminianism

Dr. Hector Macpherson points out that "in Covenanting circles heresy appears to have been practically unknown. A charge of Arminianism appears to have been preferred against one noted field preacher, John Welwood, but he stated emphatically in a letter that he had vindicated himself. James Fraser of Bres, a really deep thinker, was charged not only with Arminianism, but also with its corollary, the belief in a universal atonement; and though the charge was denied, it seems to have been not entirely baseless .... Fraser alone among the writers and preachers of the time seems to have had a glimmering of the fact that there was an element of truth in Arminianism and in the idea of universal atonement. While denying that he was an Arminian, he maintained, in a certain sense, a common redemption. In his Treatise on Justifying Faith, written while in prison on the Bass, Fraser outlined the view that Christ had purchased 'common benefits,' the ordinary temporal blessings of life, and that owing to His grace the world is sustained and its material blessings enjoyed by all. Further, he stated that 'Christ did by His one infinite indivisible satisfaction and ransom satisfy divine justice for the sins of all mankind, though with different intentions and ends according to the different objects thereof' - the intention being to save the elect but not the non-elect." (Covenanters under Persecution, pp.58,75).



## CHAPTER XIX

### AMYRALDISM, AND THE SCHOOL OF SAUMUR

It is quite evident that Fraser cannot be called without qualification a Calvinist. If a label has to be found for his theology, and in particular for his theory of universal redemption, that of Calvinism pure and simple is obviously out of the question. And while in this particular theory he is more of an Arminian than a Calvinist, yet Arminianism can hardly be regarded as an adequate description of it. But there is one historic system of doctrine to which his theory shows close affinities, much closer in fact than any which exist between it and either of those just mentioned. The system in question is Amyraldism, or the theology of the French School of Saumur, the School of the Scotsman John Cameron. The universal redemption, or 'hypothetical redemption,' of that school is in all essential points the same as Fraser's theory.

Fraser's debt to Amyraldism has been noted by more than one critic. Dr. C.G. M'Crie, for example, says: "About the middle of the seventeenth century one Amyraut, Professor in the French Protestant Seminary at Saumur, propounded a theory of

the Atonement known among theologians as 'hypothetical redemption.' The theory is an attempt to find a middle ground between Augustinianism and Arminianism, and so is open to the objections taken to both systems. In 1749 there was published a work which substantially reproduced the theory of the continental divine. The Title of the book is A Treatise on Justifying Faith; and the writer of it was the Rev. James Fraser, proprietor of Brea in the parish of Resolis, Ross-shire" (1). More recently the Rev. D. Beaton, referring to Fraser's book, says that "its references to the Atonement were distinctly Amyraldian" (2).

The point to note is that Amyraldism is essentially an attempt to find a middle way, a golden mean, between two theories neither of which is felt to be entirely in accordance with the teaching of Scripture on the nature of the Atonement. And Fraser frankly confesses more than once that his endeavour in propounding his theory was to find such a golden mean. He had no wish to strike out on an entirely new line, or to found a new school of theology; his purpose was to offer a theory which by retaining all that was good in the commonly-held but not entirely satisfactory theories of his time, and rejecting all in them that men found difficult to accept, might have a reconciling influence among theologians and schools of theology. The anonymous editor (or publisher) of the 1749 Faith Treatise certainly believed that such was Fraser's purpose. In his Letter to the Reader he speaks of Fraser

as "leading as it were a middle path betwixt two extreme dangers, so that the candid reader through the blessing of God may be saved from splitting upon the rocks of Arminian and Popish errors on the one side, and right-hand extremes that many divines in former periods have gone into, who were esteemed orthodox concerning the extent of Christ's death" (3).

Fraser himself seldom mentions by name either Amyraldism or the School of Saumur, but over and over again both in those few passages in which direct references are found and elsewhere through the Faith Treatises he makes it quite clear that he knew and approved of the Amyraldian theories. For example, in the First Treatise, in the fourth chapter, when dealing with the proper subject of faith, he writes: "Some maintain that the adequate proper subject of faith is the understanding only, that the will is the secondary subject in as much as it is affected by the understanding to choose and embrace that good which the understanding by faith first sees to be so. Sp Tilenus, Essenius in their common-places, so likewise Mr. Perkins, and Dr. Baron in his Philosophia Theologiae Ancillans de Fide; Amyrald, and many others especially of our first Reformers" (4). And in one of the most important sections of the Appendix on Christ's Death he deals with the contention that his theory is "contrary to the current of the most godly and judicious Protestant divines, contrary to our Confession of Faith, and to the professed doctrine of the Church we live in; disputed against by our most famous men, and odious to all

that truly fear God, and therefore not to be maintained" (5). He denies all this, and in the course of his defence of himself maintains that among those who hold the theory which he has propounded are "many of the Reformed French divines, and most of the professors of Saumur" (6).

What exactly was Amyraldism? G.P. Fisher speaks of it as a "remarkable attempt to mitigate the repugnance that was often awakened by the Calvinistic doctrine of election" (8). He goes on to say that "the French school of Saumur, one of the Protestant academies of theology, had for its professors, after the year 1633, three men of marked ability and erudition, Louis Cappellus (Cappel), Moses Amyraldus (Amyraut), and Joshua Placeus (La Place). Before them John Cameron, a Scotchman by birth, had produced some commotion by his doctrine as to the operation of Grace, which was that the spirit renews the soul, not by acting on the will directly, but rather by an enlightening influence on the intellect. This was broached partly for the sake of parrying Roman Catholic objections to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. Cameron's theory did not attenuate this doctrine in the slightest degree, as was admitted so soon as his theory was understood. His substantial orthodoxy was allowed by those who withheld their sanction from the theory. The most eminent of his pupils was Amyraut. He boldly propounded the doctrine of hypothetical universal grace, as it was called, which was substantially equivalent to a doctrine of universal atonement.



He maintained that there is in God, in some proper sense, a will or desire (velleitas, affectus) that all should repent and be saved. In case all should repent, no purpose of God would stand in the way of their salvation. But the indispensable means of repentance - regenerating grace, following election - are not bestowed on them. In the order of nature the decree of election follows the decree providing the atonement" (9).

Benjamin Warfield says of Amyraldism that it was "the first important modification of the Calvinistic system which has retained a position within its limits." "This modification," he continues, "received the condemnation of the contemporary Reformed world, which reasserted with emphasis the importance of the doctrine that Christ actually saves by His spirit all for whom He offers the sacrifice of His blood" (10).

"If 'varieties of Calvinism,'" Dr. Warfield goes on, "are to be spoken of with reference to anything more than details, of importance in themselves no doubt, but of little significance for the systematic development of the type of doctrine, there seem not more than three which require mention: Supralapsarianism, infralapsarianism, and what may perhaps be called in this reference, postredemptionism; all of which (as indeed their very names import) take their start from a fundamental agreement in the principles which govern the system. The difference between these various tendencies



of thought within the limits of the system turns on the place given by each to the decree of election, in the logical ordering of the 'decrees of God.'.... (The) peculiarity (of the postredemptionists) consists in insisting that election succeeds, in the order of thought, not merely the decree of the fall but that of redemption as well, taking the term redemption here in the narrower sense of the impetration of redemption by Christ. They thus suppose that in His electing decree God conceived man not merely as fallen but as already redeemed. This involves a modified doctrine of the atonement from which the party has received the name of Hypothetical Universalism, holding as it does that Christ died to make satisfaction for the sins of all men without exception if - if, that is, they believe: but that, foreseeing that none would believe, God elected some to be granted faith through the ~~effective~~ effectual operation of the Holy Spirit. The indifferent standing of the postredemptionists in historical Calvinism is indicated by the treatment accorded it in the historical confessions. It alone of the 'varieties of Calvinism' has been made the object of formal confessional condemnation; and it received condemnation in every important Reformed confession written after its development.... That, despite its confessional condemnation, postredemptionism has remained a recognised form of Calvinism and has worked out a history for itself in the Calvinistic Churches (especially in America) may be taken as evidence that its advocates,

while departing, in some important particulars, from typical Calvinism, have nevertheless remained, in the main, true to the fundamental postulates of the system" (11).

Amyraldism, says T.M. Lindsay, "was one of three attempts (the others being Arminianism and the Covenant Theology) made during the seventeenth century to break through the iron ring of Predestination within which the Reformed Scholastic of that century had enclosed the theology of the Reformed Church" (12). At Saumur Amyraut, who had been appointed a professor there in 1633, soon became suspect on account of his profound distrust, not of the Calvinism of the Institutes, but of the Calvinism which was commonly taught in the early seventeenth century. In company with two or three like-minded colleagues, in particular Gappel and De la Place, he protested against the attempt to enclose everything thinkable within 'the ring of fence,' as Lindsay calls it, 'of a Divine decree, which was simply the Aristotelian category of Substance under another name' (12). He had no intention, any more than Fraser had later on in the same century, of breaking with Calvinism or erecting a theory contradictory to the Calvinistic theory of predestination. He held, again as Fraser did, that he was really getting back to the Calvinism of the Institutes, and that his doctrine was the legitimate and historical development of that system.

Amyraut's declared purpose was to make plain what was already implicit in original Calvinism, and incidentally to

show the Lutherans, who insisted on retaining the thought of a general reference of the Atonement, that their objections to the Calvinistic doctrine of a limited reference were not altogether well-founded. His endeavour was to reconcile these two points of view, and in seeking to do so <sup>he</sup> made use of certain pairs of ideas, in particular Providence and Election, and Creation and Redemption. "Providence," he held, "may be looked on as belonging to the course of nature; but Election is a special instance of Providence and at the same time the peculiar and gracious work of God. Creation belongs to the ordinary course of nature, and Redemption is a special instance of Creation, and is nevertheless a unique and gracious work of God" (13). This particular thought was to reappear in Fraser's theology later on.

Amyraut held that the essential nature of God is goodness, and by goodness he meant love limited by the conditions which the universal moral law must impose upon it. Man comes into contact with the goodness of God in creation, and also in providence, which is simply creation become continuous. When sin enters to disturb and upset the ideal relation which ought to exist between God <sup>the</sup> ~~and~~ Creator and man the created, atonement becomes necessary both in order that the righteousness of God may be satisfied, and also that men may be saved from the consequences of their sins. God's goodness remains unchanged, and is in fact made manifest in His purpose to save men. Redemption like creation springs from that goodness. "The

work of Redemption," says Lindsay, "is thus the carrying out of the original work of creation. The purpose ~~is~~ to redeem is set in the environment of the original purpose to create. When looked at from the point of view of Creation, the supralapsarian, there is a universal reference in the work of Christ. But when we look at this purpose of God in presence of sin, and when we know that some men do die impenitent and therefore are not saved - when we take the infralapsarian purpose to save - we see that the theoretically universal reference is limited practically by the fact that some are not saved. The universal reference is theoretical or hypothetical; the limited reference to the elect is practical and real. Christ's work has real reference only to the some who are saved. This placing a hypothetical universal reference round the limited reference in the work of Christ is the distinctive feature in the theology of Amyraldism" (14).

Amyraut was a voluminous writer; Bayle recounts the title-pages of no fewer than thirty-two books of which he was the author. These show that he took part in all the great controversies on predestination and Arminianism which in his time so agitated and harassed all Europe. What is perhaps his most outstanding work, his Traité de la predestination, in which he tried to mitigate the harsh features of the Calvinistic system by his hypothetical universalism, appeared in 1634. His theory gave rise to a charge of heresy, of which he was acquitted at the National Synod at Alençon in 1637.



Amyraut's distinctive contribution to the doctrine of the Atonement, and that part of his theology which in particular exerted the greatest influence on Fraser, was that he discarded the strict idea of salvation as something which is limited to the elect - the idea which was almost universally held by the Calvinists of that day - and made the goodness of God, which applies to all men without distinction, still active in His righteousness, which is His goodness in the presence of sin. On these grounds he could offer to men a hypothetical universalism, and yet retain the idea of a real limitation of salvation to those actually saved.

As Lindsay points out, Amyraut's theory prompted men to ask where exactly he stood with reference to historic Calvinism, and also to other modifications of that system, such as Arminianism. "The question was asked, What changes this hypothetical universal reference into a real particular reference? Is it the action of God or of man? If the change arises from man's power to resist what God has purposed to do for all, then Amyraut was an Arminian, as the Dutch and the Swiss theologians asserted. Did the mystery of the change lie hidden in God? Then his theology did not differ substantially from that of the divines of Dordrecht, save perhaps in sentiment. The latter was the view taken by the French Reformed Church" (15).

In all essential particulars it will be seen that Fraser's theory of universal redemption is indistinguishable from that



of Amyraut. Fraser insisted, as Amyraut did, that God desires the happiness of all men, and that none ~~are~~<sup>is</sup> excluded by a divine decree from sharing in the gifts, in particular the gift of salvation, held out in the Gospel. Like Amyraut he held that one cannot obtain salvation without faith in Christ, and that there is no objective reason why any should be without this faith. And both maintained that God refuses to none the power of believing, though He does not grant to all His assistance that they may improve this power to saving purposes; and that they may perish through their own fault, for though God may deny to some the subjective grace which is necessary for salvation, yet the final disaster which overtakes such is not to be laid to the charge of God: if men perish, and all the race who are not among the elect must inevitably perish, the guilt is upon their own heads. God, in some proper sense, wills or desires that all men should repent and be saved; and in case all should repent, there is no decree of purpose of God to stand in the way of their salvation. But the fact is that regenerating grace, which follows upon election, and is the indispensable means of repentance, is not bestowed upon all men; it is given only to the elect. All have been redeemed by Christ, but not to all is grace given, and so some in the end perish. In all of this Amyraut and Fraser are at one. Neither, it will be noted, offers any satisfactory reason for holding that to lack regenerating grace, which is necessary for salvation, and

which only God bestows, is to be morally responsible for the damnation which must inevitably follow. They do not profess to explain why this regenerating grace is bestowed upon some and refused to others, apart from saying that none deserve it, and if some have it that is entirely due to an arbitrary act of God. Here as elsewhere both Amyraut and Fraser, confidently believing that their theory solved the difficulties inherent in the commonly accepted systems of their day, failed to realise that they were creating further and perhaps more serious difficulties than any they had removed.

V

F R A S E R ' S   I N F L U E N C E

"I think Fraser left more traces of himself  
on our theology than we commonly suppose."

- Walker's Theology and Theologians  
of Scotland, p. 83.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE BREACH IN THE REFORMED PRESBYTERY

1753.

It now remains to consider the effects of Fraser's theology, and in particular his theory of universal redemption, upon Scottish theology and the history of the Scottish Church. It would not be true to say that that theology influenced our land in any way that was deep or widespread or permanent. At the same time Fraser's teaching did count for something in Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century, and in fact led to dissension amounting in the end to disruption in one Scottish communion - the Reformed Presbytery - and to serious upheaval in another - the Associate Synod, which felt compelled to depose one its ministers on account of his advocacy of Fraser's views.

In his Scottish Theology and Theologians Dr. James Walker of Carnwath points out that when the second part of Fraser's Treatise on Faith appeared in 1749 it "created no little commotion in two communities, the Cameronian and the Antiburgher. Two of the five ministers of the Cameronian presbytery seem to have embraced its views substantially,

and broke off from good Mr. Millan. An excellent minister of the Secession also became tainted, and was deposed" (1). "It was not difficult to answer them at almost every point," Dr. Walker continues. "That whole notion of gospel vengeance was altogether out of keeping with the spirit of the Bible. How monstrous the idea of the Father satisfied, and the Saviour made the wrath-inflicter ! What did you gain by this ? That vague doctrine of redemption did not help you to the real one. Meant as a ladder to it, it really broke down under the first footstep placed on it. The work soon passed out of memory. The most important result of its production was the theological discussions which it brought from the pen of Adam Gobb, the ablest and most important, I imagine, of their day. At the same time, I think Fraser left more traces of himself on our theology than we commonly suppose" (2).

Not all will agree with Dr. Walker's criticism of Fraser's theology; whatever its defects that theology cannot be summarily dismissed, as he endeavours to do, in a couple of sentences. But for the present let us look at some of the effects of the publication of the second part of the Treatise on Faith. And first of all, in the Cameronian body, or Reformed Presbytery.

As has already been pointed out there were those at the time of the Revolution Settlement who were not satisfied with what happened then. The Cameronians in particular were far from happy, believing as they did that justice had not been



done to the Covenanting position, or to those who had accepted the Covenants, and who through the long and bitter years of persecution had suffered for their adherence to them. When they found that the Settlement passed over the Covenants in silence they felt that to accept it was to betray all that they and their martyred brethren had fought for. The religious toleration upon which William insisted was anathema to them. "If the seventeenth century had an idol in theology," it has been said, "it was the divine right of Presbytery, and if it had an idol in practice it was the duty of Covenanting" (3).

The Cameronians, as Dr. C.G. M'Crie has pointed out, really took their rise in the Indulgences of Charles II. and James VII. "As a measure of relief for the harassed and wronged Presbyterian ministers of Scotland," he writes, "the Indulgences of Charles II. and of his brother James VII., were worthless, such mercy and grace as they seemed to hold out being balanced by a machinery of restriction in the case of those accepting them, and by additional measures of severity and cruelty directed against the recusants. But they proved, what their framers probably hoped they would be, apples of discord in the counsels of the Covenanters. By their introduction three parties were created :- those who accepted indulgence and returned to their charges; those who did not accept it for themselves, but left others free to do so, and who continued to hold intercourse with the indulged; and those who denounced acceptance of indulgence in any form as a sin,

and preached separation from all guilty of it as a duty" (4). The third party, those who were opposed to compromise in any shape or form, were led by men of the stamp of Richard Cameron, Donald Cargill, and James Renwick; from the first-named they of course took the title "Cameronians." Of Cameron it has been said that he was "one of the bravest, one of the finest, but one of the most blindly fanatical Covenanters" (5).

Of the "Societies" into which the Cameronians formed themselves one of the most graphic descriptions, though not an altogether sympathetic one, has been given by H. Gray Graham who says that they "existed in every parish in the Whiggish counties, and were formed by men who met for prayer or conference. At these meetings a 'question was put' for debate on theology or Scripture. Clad in their big blue bonnets and rough woollen plaiding, they would stiffly dispute each point for hours at their secret gatherings in barns or farms. These religious unions remained in full force long after the Revolution, composed chiefly of the Cameronians who kept by the Solemn League and Covenant, who disowned the uncovenanted sovereign, would take no oath of allegiance, and would pay no cess. They were thoroughly organised in a network of associations throughout the country. Each 'Society' contained ten or twelve members, who met once a week; a combination of these societies formed an 'Association,' which met once a month; and these again were united in what were called 'Correspondences,' each of which was known by its

locality, such as the 'Correspondence of Nithsdale,' of Annandale, or of Fifeshire. These conclaves met every year, when grievances were ventilated, knotty points unravelled, and religious vigour and self-confidence were maintained. These men and societies proved thorns in the side of westland and south-country ministers, whose ministrations they attended only if it pleased them" (6). As the historian of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland has pointed out, these Societies "did not claim to be a Church, but only fellowship societies of private Christians meeting together for mutual edification and strengthening, and having no idea of forming a separate Church" (7).

After Renwick's execution in 1688 conventicle frequenters and Society-men depended for the discharge of ministerial functions upon three nonconformist ministers, William Boyd, Thomas Lining, and Alexander Shields. When, however, the Revolution Settlement was accepted by the vast majority of the people of Scotland these three men became lost to the cause of nonconformity for to them, as to so many others, that Settlement of comprehension and moderation was satisfactory, and accordingly they intimated their approval of the Church of the Revolution and were received as ministers by it. But, as Dr. C.G. M'Crie points out, their followers were not so ready to accept the provisions of the Settlement. "To the rank and file of the followers of Cameron and Renwick," he says, "the Revolution of 1690 presented itself in a very

different light from that in which it was seen by their living leaders. The majority refused to acknowledge the Prince and Princess of Orange as King and Queen of Scotland, these personages being in their eyes without covenant qualification, and supporters of prelacy in England. In the Church of the Settlement they failed to recognise the Church of Knox, of Melville and of Henderson. There was for them a fatal flaw in the legislative recognition of presbytery in as much as it was not based on the jus divinum for which they contended, but simply on a regard to the inclination of the nation. Further, there was no reference to the attainments of the Second Reformation or the perpetual obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant, and the Statute fallen back upon, that of 1592, was, in their judgment, vitiated by the right of calling and being present at meetings of General Assembly being conceded to the reigning Sovereign or his representative" (8).

For a period of sixteen years after the Revolution Settlement the Societies were without ordained ministers or licensed preachers. But in 1706 John M'Millan, of Belmaghie in the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, threw in his lot with them. M'Millan's parents were Society people, his boyhood had been spent among Covenanters of the strictest type, and he had, as was only natural in the circumstances, a strong and undisguised sympathy with the Suffering Remnant. "The very blood in his veins," says Dr. H.M.B. Reid, "was Covenanting blood" (9). "Since he had been a boy," says another, "he was a separatist" (10).



Soon after his admission to Balmaghie in 1701 he came into conflict with his Presbytery, and in 1703 he was deposed for disorderly and schismatical practices. He appealed to "the first free and rightly, lawfully constituted General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for remeid and redress" (11), and in the following year published his True Narrative of the events and circumstances of his deposition. The Narrative closes with these words :- "Therefore, he resolves, in the strength of the Lord, to preach the Gospel as formerly, and to take and accept invitation ~~from~~ for that end where he may find it" (12). His first negotiations were with John Hepburn, of Urr in the Presbytery of Dumfries, but these eventually broke down.

After a period during which he was without any definite ecclesiastical connection M'Millan got into touch with the General Meeting of the United Societies. His name first appears in the minutes of the General Meeting on April 5th, 1704, when a letter from him came up for consideration. He conferred with the members of the Meeting on January 31st, 1705, and again on February 13th, 1706, and on August 14th, 1706 submitted to them. On October 9th of the latter year he was called to become their minister, his call being signed by thirty-two representatives of the "United Societies and General Correspondencies of the Suffering Remnant of the true Presbyterian Church in Scotland."

"He would be a minister of the Gospel," says his



biographer, "but he was resolved to submit to no authority save Christ's own. Christ had a 'kirk' in Scotland somewhere, which he sought with unwavering steadfastness. He failed to find it in the Establishment; for that, according to his view, had early separated from Christ. He could not find it in the brief, though powerful movement of Hepburn; for Hepburn seemed in some degree to be serving two masters. At last he sought and found it among the 'Suffering Remnant,' with whom indeed his boyhood and youth were entwined, and among whom, in the prelatic days, his own father and mother had endured hardness. The various tackings and wanderings of his career were not the results of 'weakness' or 'disingenuity,' as his critic, Andrew Cameron, declared. They were nothing more than the successive efforts of a resolute voyager on the sea ecclesiastical, determined at all risks to reach firm land. When once he gave in his adhesion to the United Societies, he never faltered or turned back. And he touched ground early enough to spend forty-six toilsome years in the pastorate" (13).

In 1743 M'Millan was still the sole ordained minister of the Societies, but in that year he was joined by the Rev. Thomas Nairn. Nairn was ordained as minister of Abbotshall in Fifeshire in 1710, but in 1737 he left the Church of Scotland and joined the Seceders. He was called to Linktown where he continued to labour until differences arose between him and the Associate Presbytery in December, 1742. The

trouble had to do with the action of the Presbytery in adopting a resolution condemnatory of those who were opposed to the then civil authority. From this action Nairn dissented, and in the end, having failed to obtain satisfaction, declined the authority of the Presbytery, and at once entered into communication with the Societies. No time was lost in giving him a call to be M'Millan's associate. This was on April 4th, 1743, and at the same time the question was raised of forming a regular Presbytery now that the Societies had two ordained ministers. The Presbytery was ultimately 'erected' at Braehead on August 1st, 1743; this is confirmed by Nairn's own testimony in a sermon preached at the ordination of Alexander Marshall on November 15th, 1744. Nairn's subsequent career is somewhat veiled in mystery. Apparently the Associate Presbytery, in spite of his desertion to the Societies, considered that he was still subject to their jurisdiction for in November 1747 he was served with a libel. The case dragged on till February, 1750, when he was visited with the sentence of the greater excommunication. Owing to the absence of the records for the period his subsequent connection with the Reformed Presbytery is equally obscure. It is known that he was sent on at least one mission to the adherents of the Church in Ireland, but he appears to have left the Presbytery soon after joining it. He was brought under its censure, according to one account, because of some ecclesiastical misdemeanour; according to another, he fell out

with M'Millan over some point of doctrine. The historian of the Reformed Presbyterian Church merely says that "his conduct brought him under the censures of the Church" (14). He was restored to the Church of Scotland in 1751, and died in 1764.

This then was the body within which Fraser's Treatise on Faith, on the publication of its second part in 1749, was to create the first stir of interest. Dr. C.G. M'Crie devotes one short paragraph to the matter. "As there was reason to think that some of their members sympathised with Fraser's views, the Reformed Presbytery, he writes, "felt constrained to give a deliverance on the subject. Final action was taken at a presbytery meeting in 1753, when, by a majority of two ministers and three elders, the teaching of the Treatise was declared to be 'dangerous doctrine.' The minority, consisting of two ministers and two elders, protested against the finding, and constituted themselves a separate Court, to which they gave the name of 'The Reformed Presbytery of Edinburgh.' This attenuated body of nonconformists maintained existence for some sixty-four years; but after 1817 all traces of corporate life and action disappear" (15).

What actually happened must now <sup>be</sup> told in greater detail. In 1753 when the breach took place the Reformed Presbytery had six ministers:- (1) The veteran John M'Millan, now in his 84th year. (2) Alexander Marshall, who, as has just been mentioned, was ordained on November 15th, 1744. As early as May 30th, 1737, the General Meeting had determined "to call

forth to the office of the holy ministry Mr. Charles Umpherston and Mr. Alexander Marshall whom we judge the most fit and qualified persons amongus being allowed teaching, and of known integrity to the cause of Christ" (16). Umpherston was at that time surgeon at Pentland, and was later to write the pamphlet, Observations on a Wolf in a Sheep's Skin, in which the breach in the Presbytery is dealt with. He was the father-in-law of the younger M'Millan, and died in 1758, aged 79. The ordination proposed in 1737 could not of course be carried through as M'Millan was still the sole minister of the Society. In 1740 Marshall, along with two others, was appointed to draw up what is known as the Mount Herrick Declaration. In <sup>1743</sup>~~1753~~, as we have seen, the Reformed Presbytery was duly constituted, ordination was now possible, and the following year Marshall was duly set apart. In the same year he was sent with Nairn to visit the societies in Ireland, with which intercourse had hitherto been only by letter. By what Dr. Couper calls "a curious example of the ecclesiastical workings of those times" (17), Marshall was solemnly deposed in January 1748 from the ministry by the Associate Synod, with which he had never had any connection.

(3) James Hall, ordained in 1750. Before the Breach in 1753 not much is known of Hall, apart from the fact that he was ordained at Bothwell on August 28th of the year just mentioned.

(4) John M'Millan, son of the elder M'Millan, ordained in 1750. Born at Eastforth, Carnwath, on July 4th, 1729,



he was ordained at Bothwell on September 20th, 1750, and first comes into prominence in connection with the 1753 Breach.

(5) Hugh Innes, ordained at Broomhill, Lanarkshire, on November 21st, 1751.

(6) John Cuthbertson, who was ordained at Braehead on May 18th, 1747, but who as he was sent to America in 1752, and so was absent when the Breach took place the following year hardly concerns us here. Little is known about him. He was born, probably about 1720, at Carnwath, where he is said to have owned some house property. Like Marshall he was deposed from the ministry by the Associate Synod on January 7th, 1748.

These were the ministerial members of the Reformed Presbytery when the controversy arose in 1753 within that body over Fraser's book. Before, however, that trouble came to a head all had not been well with the Presbytery. It would appear that the younger members were inclined to hold laxer views on the Atonement, among other things, than old M'Millan approved of; and in addition they were lacking in that deference to him and to his opinions which his age, experience, and sufferings seemed to warrant.

Soon after the publication in 1749 of the second part of Fraser's Treatise it was brought up for examination by the Presbytery, and to make their position clear in those matters with which the Treatise was specially concerned the members declared their faith in a series of four propositions. This,



however, did not settle the matter. It was quite evident that some of the members of the Presbytery were strongly disposed in favour of Fraser's views with regard to the nature and extent of the Atonement. Old John M'Millan was aware of this and did his best to get the Presbytery to come to a clear and unequivocal decision on the whole question.

It was finally agreed to dispose of the matter once and for all at a meeting to be held at Brownhill, in the Parish of Bothwell, on 7th April, 1753. Nine members of the Presbytery attended that meeting - four ministers, and five elders. The ministers were the M'Millans, father and son, together with James Hall and Hugh Innes. Cuthbertson, as we have seen, had gone to America in the previous year, and Marshall was prevented by illness from attending. Hugh Innes, the most recently ordained minister in the Presbytery, was called upon to preside. Fraser's doctrine of the extent of the Atonement, as set forth in the Appendix to Chapter five of the Second Treatise, was discussed at great length and from every possible angle, historical, theological, and personal. Particular attention was given to its relation to the distinctive witness of the Reformed Presbytery.

After two days' debate the matter was put to the vote, the issue being stated as follows :- "Whether Mr. Fraser's maintaining, That the Lord Jesus Christ satisfied for the sins of all mankind so that this satisfaction might be competent to be proposed to them in the Gospel, and pleaded

by them for their justification; and that this satisfaction is the ground and formal reason upon which faith is founded, be a dangerous doctrine."

The M'Millans, father and son, together with three elders, voted for the affirmative, that is, in condemnation of Fraser's views; while Hall and two elders voted for the negative. Innes as moderator had no deliberative vote. Fraser's views were thus condemned by a majority of two. It was known that Marshall, had he been present, would have sided with the M'Millans, while Innes favoured the minority, so that the fact that neither of these was able to record his vote, the one being absent, and the other in the chair, made no essential difference to the result.

A split in the Presbytery followed the declaration of the vote. The minority, it is on record, exclaimed "in a very strange manner against the Presbytery as if they had been the greatest heretics in the world, crying out that they had razed the very foundations of the Christian faith, overturned the whole Gospel, cut the sinews of their own salvation, might henceforth preach the Law but had not left themselves one word of Gospel to preach" (18).

Before the Presbytery adjourned that evening an attempt was made to turn the decision into a formal Act of Presbytery, but the endeavour failed. The following morning, however, the matter was carried a stage further, and a very long stage at that. The minority were determined to do all they

could to overturn the decision of the previous day. They held that the vote was null and void, giving as their reasons, first, that all the members of the Presbytery had not had an opportunity of expressing their mind, and, secondly, that the decision was ~~not~~ in accordance with Scripture. They held, further, that "the reverend Messrs. Hugh Innes, moderator, James Hall, minister, Adam Reid, ruling elder, and John Cameron, ruling elder and clerk, pro tempore," were "the essential part of the Presbytery." Confusion became worse confounded when a spectator demanded that the majority ministers should be called to the bar to account for their iniquitous conduct, and that in the meantime they should be suspended from the present exercise of their office till proper censure could be inflicted, and suitable conviction obtained. It was obvious that compromise between the majority and the minority was out of the question. The moderator, supported by the minority, adjourned the meeting to one of the adjacent villages, and concluded the proceedings with prayer; while the majority resumed their places and continued the sederunt as a Presbytery. Henceforth the two bodies went their separate ways, each claiming to be the true Reformed Presbytery, and refusing to have any dealings with the other.

"It seems certain," says Matthew Hutchison, "that the party which seceded from the Reformed Presbytery did not accept Fraser's scheme in all its parts; but that they did accept the doctrine of a universal satisfaction is beyond

question. From the pamphlets that were published by both parties, we are enabled to mark with some measure of accuracy the difference that existed between them. Both held the reality and the infinite value and sufficiency of the satisfaction of Christ, that this satisfaction infallibly secured the salvation of the elect, that the Gospel was to be offered freely to all men, and that the efficacious, irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit was necessary to persuade and enable men to embrace this offer. Both denied that Christ had obtained for all men sufficient subjective grace whereby they can believe unto salvation, and both accepted the statement of Boston and the Marrow-men regarding Christ as the official Saviour of the world, and as given of God by deed of gift or grant to mankind sinners. But along with these there were well marked differences. Those who left the Presbytery maintained with respect to the satisfaction of Christ, that it was 'clothed with a two-fold divine appointment, the one general, the other special. In the former sense Christ satisfied for the sins of all mankind, so that His satisfaction may be sustained as the legal ground and meritorious cause for which mankind should be admitted into a state of probation, declared capable of receiving an offer of life and of salvation, and upon which they should be authorised to rest and plead for their deliverance from their guilt and misery. On the other hand, the satisfaction of Christ as clothed with a special appointment, is the legal

ground and meritorious cause for which a chosen number of mankind shall be saved.'

"The Presbytery denied any such two-fold appointment of the satisfaction of Christ, and held that it was offered exclusively for the sins of the elect and secures their salvation. The seceding party held that the ground and reason upon which faith is founded is the general appointment of Christ's satisfaction as made for the sins of mankind; while the Presbytery held that it is the command of God to believe in Christ as able to save; the former based the universal offer on the universality of the satisfaction, though in this view it secured nothing, while the latter rested it on the infinite sufficiency of the satisfaction and the gracious invitation and command of God to receive it.

"On another related point long controverted they also differed; for the seceding party held that common benefits, enjoyed by reprobates as well as by the elect, were the purchase of Christ by His death. This was denied by the Presbytery, by whom it was maintained that these benefits as enjoyed by the non-elect, 'are rather to be accounted consequences following upon Christ's purchase than proper effects thereof as to them;' while Durham is quoted with approbation when he asserts, that in the case of Christ's own people, these outward favours are not only consequents but properly purchased fruits of Christ's death. The leader of the Anti-burghers put this matter perhaps more strongly than



the Presbytery would have approved. He would not speak of common material benefits enjoyed by wicked men as consequents of Christ's death, but as proceeding from God as the great Creator and Preserver of men; and he is said to have uttered these emphatic words from his own pulpit - 'Here stand I, Adam Gib, who was never indebted to the blood of Christ for a cup of cold water.'

"Such is a general view of the main points in this dispute; and it can hardly escape notice how closely the opinions held by the less orthodox part of the Presbytery, resembled those that were the cause of keen discussion about fifty years ago in the United Secession Church, in which something like a two-fold satisfaction, under the form of the general and special reference of the Atonement, had a very prominent place. In earlier Reformation discussions it was called Amyraldism, and seems largely to have its root in anxiety to present, as was thought, a more satisfactory basis for the general Gospel call" (19). Hutchison wrote that in 1893.

To return to the actual course of the controversy - the debate was continued through the medium of printed literature. At a meeting held on 31st Aug. of the same year (1753) the minority decided to issue a defence of their position, and otherwise to do what they could to counteract "the dangerous consequences likely to ensue by the conduct of some brethren who lately separated from their communion, and pretended to

erect themselves into a distinct judicatory upon a new and erroneous ground, whereby the people under the Presbytery's inspection are in danger of being ensnared and withdrawn into a stated opposition to several important truths of our holy religion." This defence was issued before the end of the year, and bore the title. The True State of the Difference between the Reformed Presbytery and some brethren who lately deserted them. When one remembers that it came from the minority Presbytery this pamphlet did not err on the side of modesty either in its title or in its contents.

Adam Gib criticised this defence as being both historically and doctrinally at fault. "The historical part of this pamphlet," he wrote, "afforded strong presumptions that truth could not follow in the doctrinal part. The history being chiefly made up of self-evident and atrocious calumnies, abundantly poured out upon old Mr. M'Millan. And the doctrine which follows, taught with a high degree of sophistical ignorance and presumption, is a general adopting and embellishing of the new scheme" (20). The new scheme to which Gib alluded was of course Fraser's theory of universal redemption. Gib also spoke slightly of the minority as the "new Presbytery, wholly constituted on the ground of universal redemption - and whose absurd constitution is good enough for their cause." As Dr. Couper points out (21), Gib's contempt for the minority Presbytery may be due in part at least to the fact that their action helped to bring trouble upon his own

Church. Their pamphlet, The True State, which he criticised so unsparingly, could be bought cheaper than Fraser's Treatise, and so could be more easily procured by those who were likely to be misled by it.

After the publication of The True State, and before the end of the year - actually on December 1st, 1753 - the elder M'Millan died. It is on record that on his death-bed he heartily and freely forgave Messrs. Hall, Innes, and Wright what they had done against him, and left his testimony against universal satisfaction, i.e. against Fraser's doctrine of legal or forensic justification (22). The following year his son issued a reply to The True State. His pamphlet was entitled A Serious Examination and Impartial Survey of a Print, designed 'The True State, etc.,' by a pretended Presbytery at Edinburgh. The preface, containing the extract minute authorising publication, refers to the pamphlet "published by some brethren, who, pretending to assume the whole power of the Reformed Presbytery, deserted the same and pretended to erect themselves anew upon a dangerous footing, subversive of the constitution of the Reformed Presbytery."

The future history of the two branches of the Reformed Presbytery from the time of the Breach hardly concerns us here; but it may be said that while many efforts were made to bring the two sections together these all came to nothing. Not only so, but in the minority branch - those who favoured Fraser's theory - things were far from happy. In that small body

there was a clear-cut division, as there so often is in bodies similarly situated, between the right wing and the left. Though the members of the dissenting Presbytery could almost be numbered on the fingers of one hand yet in that small company there was both a conservative and a liberal element. Innes in particular offended his brethren by the catholicity of his Christian affections and interests. He encouraged George Whitefield in his work and even prayed for the prosperity of the Erastian Church of Scotland ! Hall and other members of the minority body looked askance at such laxity, for so it appeared to them to be. The more conservative section of the Presbytery reproached their broader-minded brethren for "their not preaching so faithfully against the sins of the times as they should have done, and vindicating or allowing such practices as they thought inconsistent with their professed testimony." In the end the conservative members broke away from the minority Presbytery and set up a rival organisation, with a following mainly in Berwickshire and in the eastern Borders generally, although later on they had adherents as far afield as Dunbar, Dalkeith and Dundee (23).

In 1788 the main body of the minority Presbytery had conversations with the Associate Synod with a view to some kind of union. A formal conference between the two bodies followed, but nothing came of it, the Associate Synod finding "that there was such difference betwixt them and us that they

and we could not walk together in church fellowship to the edification and comfort of one another." On two matters in particular the minority Reformed Presbytery and the Associate Synod could have had no common meeting-ground - the first of these was the extent of the Atonement, and the second the relation that ought to exist between Church and State.

After this abortive attempt at union with a larger body the minority Reformed Presbytery went its solitary way to extinction. By the end of the century it had only three ministers. The last meeting of the Presbytery as a duly constituted body took place at Kinnesswood on August 12th, 1816. Arnot, its last remaining minister, lived till 1831, and after his death those who still regarded themselves as members of the minority Reformed Presbytery passed into the Church of Scotland.

Matthew Hutchison deals with the history of the minority Presbytery in a single paragraph. "We do not know very much," he says, "regarding the history of the party that left the Reformed Presbytery. There is nothing to show that the heresy had obtained any very serious hold on the Community. A Presbytery was formed and a few preachers were licensed, one of whom was located in Glasgow and another in Fife; but the cause evidently did not prosper. Ere long dissensions broke out among themselves; some adherents had from the first rejected a part of the Westminster Confession, and the Second Head of the Informatory Vindication; and now further differences



emerged on the subject of Church communion and on other points. An agreement was patched up for a time, but matters went from bad to worse, till a principal leader among them professedly deserted all testimony-bearing for a covenanted reformation. The party got split up into fragments; and as showing the downward tendency of error, there is some ground for believing that some of this party resiled so far from their original position, as to become associated with the first Unitarian congregation formed in Edinburgh. The sphere of Mr. Hall's labours appears to have been mainly in Edinburgh, where he died in 1798. He had no successor; and the church in which he preached was purchased in 1809 for the congregation of the Rev. W. Goold, father of the Rev. W.H. Goold, D.D. Mr. Innes seems to have laboured in Fife, and died in 1765. The Presbytery formed by these Seceders continued to exist, as extract minutes show, till 1817, but seems soon after to have become extinct" (24).

Notes appended to this Chapter

- A. Fraser and the Breach of 1753.
- B. Fraser and Umpherston's Observations.
- C. Fraser and Reikie's Letter to a Friend in America.
- D. Mair and the Reformed Presbytery.

## NOTE A.

Fraser and the Breach of 1753

Of modern accounts of Fraser's part, through his Treatise, in the Breach of 1753 special mention should be made of those of Matthew Hutchison in his Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland (1893), H.M.B. Reid in A Cameronian Apostle (1896), and W.J. Couper in A Breach in the Reformed Presbytery (Records of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., vol. 1, part 1.) In addition to original sources all of the above have been drawn upon for the purposes of this Thesis, particularly Couper's very full account. Some extracts may be given from Hutchison and Reid:-

Hutchison's Account. "As early as 1749, shortly after the publication of Fraser's book, the Presbytery agreed to four propositions in opposition to errors contained in it. One of these was, 'That the Lord Jesus Christ represented and died upon the cross only in the room and stead of a select number of mankind.' The most prominent part in the agitation within the Reformed Presbytery was taken by the Rev. James Hall, who was licensed in 1750. Even before that time he had been suspected of holding the new opinions, and he was afterwards very zealous in propagating them. This was a great grief to the venerable M'Millan, now over~~x~~ eighty years of age; and being unable to be regularly present in the Presbytery, he communicated his fears and anxieties to his brethren by letter. It would seem that some of the

younger members treated him with scant respect, and made himself and his zeal for the old views the subjects of banter and ridicule, even as after his death they endeavoured to cast upon him the responsibility of the discord and division, and charged him with trying to force his own opinions upon his brethren.

"Matters grew worse during the next two years, and in November, 1752, it was agreed to take up the whole subject formally at next meeting. When the Presbytery met at Edinburgh on 7th April, 1753, only four ministers and five elders were present; Mr. Nairn had fallen under scandal, and had left the Church, Mr. Marshall was ill, and Mr. Cuthbertson had gone to America.

"After a discussion on the opinions of Fraser and the doctrine of a universal satisfaction, which lasted till late on the following evening, it was agreed that the state of the question upon which the decisive vote was to be taken, should be the following .... " (As given in this Thesis.)

"By a majority of five to three it was declared to be dangerous; the two M'Millans and ~~the~~ three elders voted on the one side, and Mr. Hall and two elders on the other; Mr. Innes was moderator, but went with the minority. Failing next day to obtain a reversal of the decision, Mr. Hall gave in a paper in his own name and in the name of his adherents, in which he protested that the decision was null and void because of the absence of two members, and because it

overturned an important article of the Christian faith, and proceeded thus:- 'Therefore the Rev. Messrs. Hall and Innes, Moderator, and Messrs Reid and Cameron, Clerk, being the essential parts of the Presbytery, do protest that the passing of the above vote is null and cannot be a judicial decision.'

"Their action with respect to a petition craving the suspension and censure of the majority, and the avowal of Mr. Hall that the minority looked upon themselves as the Presbytery, startled the others, who never anticipated such outrageous procedure, and were anxious to sist all further action till next meeting. This arrogant assumption was followed by a piece of sharp practice. In the temporary absence of some members of the majority, the Protestors hurriedly closed the meeting, and in spite of a prompt protest, immediately left the place, carrying with them all the Presbytery records, which have never been recovered ....

"It is hardly necessary to characterise the conduct of the minority. They assumed the name of the Reformed Presbytery of Edinburgh, and published a pamphlet entitled<sup>d</sup> A True State of the Difference, etc., in which an attempt is made to vindicate their procedure and their doctrine .... An Examination of the pamphlet was published in 1754, in which Mr. M'Millan, sen., is vindicated from the odious calumnies upon him, and the doctrine in dispute is fully discussed. It was prepared by a member of Presbytery, and in the minute

prefixed to it Presbyterial sanction is given to it in these terms:- "Likeas the Presbytery hereby do approve of the said Draught, as a vindication of their conduct and Principles on the Ground of Difference; and appoint the same to be published.

"Nothing is said of the writer of this Serious Examination; but on various grounds we are disposed to look upon it as the work of the younger M'Millan. At the time it was prepared there was no other clerical member of Presbytery in a position to do this; (and a pamphlet on the other side ascribes it to a clerical member), - Mr. Marshall was in ill health, and the elder M'Millan was dead before its publication. Besides this, the intimate acquaintance which the writer displays with the opinions, feelings and letters of the latter, and with all the details of the discussions and debates, together with the suppression of his own name on several occasions when he is undoubtedly referred to, strongly support the belief that the younger M'Millan was the writer; and certainly it is no discredit to him, either as to the tone which pervades it, or his knowledge of the subject, or ability to deal with it. Hall has also been charged with controverting another of the propositions adopted by the Presbytery in 1749, 'that Dominion is not founded on Grace;' but this is only slightly referred to in the Examination, and he is not directly charged with rejecting it. But in a protest by the 'Active Testimony-Bearers,' Hall and his friends are charged with doing this,



and are condemned by this extreme section of the Old Disseneters. The controversy continued for some time after the separation, but ere long died away." (Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, pp. 197-200.)

(It will be noticed that Hutchison states that the Breach took place in Edinburgh. Charles Umpherston, in his Observations on a Wolf in a Sheep's Skin, pp. 10,21, says that the discussion and final break took place at Brownhill.)

Reid's Account. "As M'Millan's ministry began in strong controversies, so it ended amid a violent dissension regarding doctrinal points. The dogma in dispute was one which has always afforded scope for division, the atonement made by our Lord. The discordant voice came from the grave. The Rev. James Fraser of Brea, while a prisoner on the Bass Rock, had written a Treatise on Justifying Faith. He died in 1698, and it was not till 1749 that the work was published. Its editor, a minister of the Associate Presbytery, was at once deposed. M'Millan's attention was drawn to the book, and the Reformed Presbytery, shortly after its publication, formulated four propositions in opposition to its teaching ....

"The Reformed Presbytery, in opposition to (Fraser's) theory, formally declared that 'Christ represented and died upon the cross only in the room and stead of a select number of mankind.' But James Hall, who had been licensed in 1750,

espoused Fraser's views, and soon a serious agitation arose in the little Church Court. M'Millan, owing to age and frailty, could not attend all the subsequent discussions, but he wrote to his brethren in terms of anxiety and distress, pleading for the old teaching. At last, in April, 1753, the storm reached its height ...." (A Cameronian Apostle, pp. 195, 197.)

Reid proceeds to give an account of the Breach which does not differ in any material respect from that given in this Thesis.

#### NOTE B.

##### Fraser and Umpherston's Observations

"The deathbed of M'Millan," says Dr. H.M. B. Reid, "is associated with the Fraser of Brea controversy in a somewhat peculiar way, inasmuch as the contemporary account is an appendix to the Observations on a Wolf in a Sheepskin of Charles Umpherston. This curious little tract is now rare, but two perfect copies are in the New College Library, Edinburgh. The Observations, dated 'November 15, N.S., 1753,' or November 4, O.S., were completed just sixteen days before M'Millan died, and possibly Umpherston embodied in them the aged minister's own arguments. This paper is a critique of Messrs. Hall and Innes, who had recently circulated a statement of their case among the Societies. Incidentally, light is thrown on the strained relations between these two

young clergymen and their spiritual father, M'Millan. The first discussion on Fraser of Brea's doctrines took place, it seems, at Brownhill, not at Braehead. M'Millan had apparently made a change of residence. Here, the aged pastor 'tabled' Fraser's doctrines as unsound. At this conference, Umpherston accuses Hall and Innes of most disrespectful conduct. '... Frequently when that pious (I say not sinless) old man did speak,' they were observed 'to turn their faces, and to make himself, and what he said, rather a matter of buffoonry, than anything else; and, to my own hearing, to express themselves in a most diminutive way, which I will not here mention.' The young men, in point of fact, as the fashion of youthful presbyters too often is, considered M'Millan a fossil, and laughed irreverently at his antiquated views and phrases. They ridiculed his remarks on 'Arminian Texts,' on a supposed 'threefold covenant,' and on assurance of salvation. Such has been the mode of assertive youth in Presbyteries, up to our own day." (A Cameronian Apostle, pp. 198, 199.) (Of the two copies of Umpherston's Observations, to which Dr. Reid refers as being in New College Library, one has been used in the preparation of this Thesis.)

## NOTE C.

Fraser and Reikie's Letter to a Friend in America

In 1754 the points in dispute in the Breach of 1753 were dealt with in a pamphlet entitled A Letter to a Friend

in America. According to the title-page this pamphlet claims that in it there "is clearly held forth the peculiar Interest that the Elect have in the Death of Christ, by Virtue of a special Appointment, in opposition to Arminians. As also The Common Interest Mankind-Sinners have in his Obedience and Death, as constitute, by a general Appointment, God's great and gracious Ordinance for their Salvation, as distinguished from fallen Angels. Likewise the necessary Connection that there is between the Doctrine of Christ's satisfying for the Sins of all Men so that it might be competent to preach Peace, and publish the glad Tidings of Salvation unto them through His Blood, and the received Principles of the Doctrines of Grace. With notes further illustrating and confirming the Truths therein contain'd." A copy of the pamphlet is in the National Library of Scotland.

The writer was a minister of the Reformed Presbytery - Peter Reikie (or Reekie), who was licensed in 1751, and in 1753 adhered to the minority. After the dissentients of 1753 had reconstituted themselves into a Presbytery in 1761 Reikie, still a probationer, acted as clerk, but he was a disturbing influence. He was ordained by them to Ireland on November 4, 1765, but was the cause of much trouble, and was deposed for contumacy on November 5, 1766. He continued for some time to preach in Glasgow to an irregular congregation.

(Cf. Couper, A Breach in the Reformed Presbytery, Records of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., i, 1, pp. 14,15; also Couper, Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, *ibid.*, ii, p. 158.)

## NOTE D.

Mair and the Reformed Presbytery

Principal John Macleod, dealing with the effects of Fraser's teaching, speaks of Mair and the Reformed Presbytery. "Mair's teaching," he says, "though put under the ban of the Synod, proved to be contagious. He had some sympathisers not only among the Seceders, but in the ranks of the minority of the Reformed Presbytery as the Cameronians were now called. Covenanting zeal was running to seed when it had a better grip of its doctrine of the Kingship of Christ and laid corresponding stress upon it than it had of the true nature of His sacrificial works as a Priest. Among them the adherents to Brea's scheme broke off and formed the New Light Reformed Presbytery. And such is the irony of history that the only avowedly Socinian or Free-Thought Congregation in Edinburgh is the present-day successor of what started as a Reformed Presbyterian Church." (Theology in the Early Days of the Secession, in Records of the Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., vol. viii, part 1, p. 8.)



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE CONTROVERSY IN THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD

1754-57.

While it was within the Reformed Presbytery that the publication in 1749 of the second part of Fraser's Treatise on Faith, with its allegedly heretical and dangerous theory of universal redemption, created the greatest stir, and led to the most serious consequences, it has to be noted that in at least one other communion it had effects almost as serious. Among the Anti-Burghers, as we are now to see, it caused no small commotion, and in the end led to the deposition of one of their ministers, the Rev. Thomas Mair, of Orwell.

To understand the implications of Mair's case it is essential to recall the origin and history of the Secession Church, and in particular to bear in mind the emphasis which that Church laid upon doctrinal soundness.

The year 1733 is one of the most important in the history of the Church of Scotland for it was in that year that the first great schism took place; the secession which took place then marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Scottish Protestantism. The peace which followed the

Revolution Settlement was shattered in a manner as drastic as it was final. Hitherto the Church of Scotland, after its stormy passage through the seventeenth century, had been moving through comparatively calm waters. "The Church of Scotland," it has been pointed out, "had undisputed sway in the land for many years after the Revolution. Except the small, unobtrusive sect of Episcopalians and the discontented Cameronians under the leadership of M'Millan, the minister of Balmaghie, there was practically no dissent. The authority of the Church was undisputed; the position of the parish ministers was without a rival" (1).

It was towards the end of 1733 that the split took place in the Church of Scotland, though the cleavage was not accepted as final until some years later. "Its causes," says Lord Moncrieff, "were rather general dissatisfaction with the prevalent habits and spirit of the Church, than any specific cause of quarrel. I cannot say that in looking over the Testimony of the Secession, while there is a great deal which commends itself to our modern notions, there are not some things which would hardly be the subject of protest or even of discussion now .... It is enough to say that, during the rest of the century, while the Church of Scotland grew colder and colder, less earnest, less vigorous, and more latitudinarian, the young blood of the Secession kept alive the evangelical spirit in Scotland in the hearts of the people; and, in many a parish where the negligence of the

times had starved the flock, they kept burning brightly the true evangelical spirit of Gospel preaching" (2).

On December 5th, 1733, four ministers of the Church of Scotland met at Gairney Bridge in Kinross-shire. They were the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, of Stirling; the Rev. William Wilson, of Perth; the Rev. Alexander Moncrieff, of Abernethy; and the Rev. James Fisher, of Kinclaven. All four were men of the highest standing, and of unblemished reputation; of them it has been said that "they were men of God, men full of faith and the Holy Ghost, men of prayer, men who preached because they believed" (3). But they were also unhappy and perturbed men; there were tendencies and movements in the Church of Scotland which they regarded with the utmost suspicion. Of them and their associates it has been said that "they had never accepted the Revolution Settlement, and were still harking back upon the Covenants like the old Protesters. 'There is a difference to be made,' wrote Ebenezer Erskine, 'between the Established Church of Scotland and the Church of Christ in Scotland,!' (4).

Now at Gairney Bridge on that December day in 1733 they were met to take counsel together with regard<sup>a</sup> to their future conduct. On the 6th of the month they decided, after much heart-searching, to constitute themselves a Presbytery, Erskine being elected Moderator and Fisher Clerk. Having fixed the date and place of their next meeting they closed the proceedings with prayer. "The place of meeting was

a sequestered wayside inn," says Dr. C.G. M'Crie, "the number of persons was small, the proceedings were marked by quaint simplicity; but before they separated these four brethren of the National Establishment had originated a movement which gives character to the ecclesiastical history of the eighteenth century and whose influence upon the religious life of Scotland is with us to this day" (5).

In order to grasp the significance of those later developments in the Secession with which we are particularly concerned a word must be said about the causes underlying this split in the Church of Scotland

"The First Secession of 1733," says Prof. G.D. Henderson, "was led by the devout and determined Eben<sup>e</sup>zer Erskine and a few other fervent Evangelicals who felt that the conditions of the Church of Scotland made separation imperative. They objected, for example, that the Headship of Christ was not adequately asserted; the Covenants were disregarded; re-establishment at the hands of the State had been accepted by Presbyterians; Toleration was thrust upon the Church by the civil authorities; Patronage was restored by the same power; ministers were violently intruded into congregations and the people deprived of their right to elect; the Church had failed to witness against theological speculation, reason and nature being preached to the disparagement of revelation and efficacious free grace; the Assembly allowed the representative of the State to appoint the time of its

meetings, and liberty of conscience to make protest against backsliding was denied to individual ministers" (6).

(1) First of all, the Seceders protested against State interference in the affairs of the Church. Soon after their secession they published an explanation of their principles and position under the title A Testimony to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Church of Scotland (The "Extra-Judicial" Testimony); and in 1736 this was followed by The Act, Declaration and Testimony (The "Judicial" Testimony). This latter work, as Cunningham says, "may be regarded as the authoritative exponent of the opinion of the first Seceders." In it they asserted the spiritual nature and the spiritual independence of the Church, and made an emphatic protest against the enforcing of religion with civil penalties, and the blending of the affairs of Church and State. The particular question at issue at the time of their secession, and in the years immediately preceding, was that of patronage. As Dr. J.R. Fleming has put it, that was "the root evil" which the Seceders attacked. "Patronages," said Wodrow, "are a yet more severe thrust at our constitution than the Toleration."

The Act of 1712 - in flat contradiction of the terms of the Revolution Settlement and also of the Treaty of Union - had restored to the old patrons the right of presentation in vacant parishes. At the Revolution the right of lay patrons to nominate ministers was abolished in favour of election by the joint votes of the heritors and the members of the Kirk



Session, but by the Act of 1712 this privilege was taken from the heritors and elders and restored to the patrons many of whom were strongly Jacobite and Episcopalian. It has been said that "by this Act, rushed through Parliament with a scandalous rapidity, and an embodiment of political intrigue and overt injustice, the Church was done one of the most scandalous wrongs in its much-wronged history" (7). By it, said John Buchan, "the dragon's teeth were sown which were to produce a melancholy harvest. The Church protested against it, but for a little it was no great grievance, since ministers continued to be placed by the will of a congregation rather than by the nomination of a patron. But presently the patrons became more active, presbyteries refused to give assent to their wishes, and the General Assemblies were congested with appeals. The device of peripatetic 'riding Committees,' sent abroad to settle disputes, was a solution which had no hope of permanence. Here was one rock of offence, the more dangerous because certain younger ecclesiastics, who were afterwards to be leaders of the Moderates, were anxious in this matter to make the Assembly dictate harshly to the presbyteries" (8).

In the twenty years between 1712 and 1732 things went from bad to worse in this matter, and many in the Church of Scotland began to be very much alarmed at the direction in which some of their leaders were going. In 1732 things came to a head. By the Act of that year, in those cases

in which the patron did not exercise his right of presentation within six months of the date of a vacancy the right of election was to pass into the hands of the heritors and elders, the interests and wishes of the parishioners, as it appeared to many, being utterly ignored. In the General Assembly the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine denounced this "respect for persons with gold ring and gay clothing beyond the man with vile raiment and poor attire." But the chief objection to the Act of 1732 was that it acquiesced in patronage, and so was held to "wound and subvert the frame and constitution of Christ's Church, shut the gospel-door of entering the Lord's House, open a window of human contrivance for access to thieves and robbers, and lay a yoke of spiritual slavery, heavier than that of Egyptian bondage, on the necks of them whom the Lord hath made free" (9).

(2) Then there was the credal and doctrinal laxity which the Seceders observed with sorrow in the Church of Scotland. It has been pointed out that "behind this secession there lay more than the Patronage Act. The Seceders were wholly out of sympathy with the general atmosphere of the Kirk and with the terms of the Revolution Settlement. They were men of the highest character and conviction, intensely earnest and devout; but they were also narrow, passionate and reactionary. They held the leniency which the Church was showing in dealing with charges of heresy to be a symptom of dangerous religious declension. They hated the whole trend of affairs, and the

manner in which the Covenants were being permitted to sink back into the realm of obsolete history" (10).

There was, for example, the case of Professor Simson of Glasgow, who on two separate occasions, first in 1714 and then in <sup>1726</sup>~~1729~~, was charged with heresy. The celebrated Mr. John M'Laren of Edinburgh, one of Simson's keenest antagonists, said of him that he was "a quick acute man, of more erudition and ingenuity than most of his clerical contemporaries" (11), while Patrick Walker, with less charity, referred to him as "a hotch-potch, or bagful of Arrian, Arminian, Socinian, Pelagian, old condemn'd damnable errors" (12), and as "the most wylie and subtile fox that ever Satan let loose into Christ's vineyard in Scotland since the Reformation" (13). Rightly or wrongly Simson was suspected of teaching Pelagianism and Arminianism, but in spite of the warnings of men like Thomas Boston, who believed that nothing less than his deposition was called for, the second trial procured for him no heavier penalty than temporary suspension, the first having resulted in an even more innocuous sentence - a gentle admonition. Later, in the case of Professor Campbell of St. Andrews, who was charged with unsound teaching, the Assembly declined to give any judgment or to pronounce any formal sentence. Such lenient treatment of what they regarded as grave errors seriously alarmed those who were later to form the Secession; if ever men did they trembled for the ark of the Lord.

The case of what came to be known as the "Auchterarder Creed" alarmed them still further. In its efforts to raise a bulwark against Arminianism the Presbytery of Auchterarder required its candidates for licence to say that it was "not sound or orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ and <sup>installing</sup> ~~installing~~ us in covenant with God." The Presbytery's purpose was quite clear: it wished to guard against the idea of terms, conditions, or qualifications in God's free offer of salvation, such as might confuse law and grace in the matter of a sinner's pardon and acceptance. But the Assembly was unwilling to let any Presbytery invade the functions of the supreme court, or to draft a formula so "unsound and debatable." On being taken to task, however, the Presbytery was able to prove to the satisfaction of the Assembly that its doctrine was sound and that no heresy was intended, though it had made use of words which were "unwarrantable and exceptionable." But in the minds of the Seceders the position which the Assembly had taken up in the matter was such as to give rise to the most serious misgivings with regard to the Church's attitude to the old Evangel.

Finally there was the Marrow controversy. Three years after the business of the "Auchterarder Creed" the Assembly condemned Fisher's The Marrow of Modern Divinity which had been republished with a preface by James Hog of Carnock in 1718, and which on its appearance then had created no small stir in certain quarters within the Church. Like the



"Auchterarder Creed" The Marrow aimed at the removing of all barriers between the sinner and Christ, and the repudiation of any modified or easier law that men might offer as a substitute for the gospel of the grace of God. The appearance of the book in its new edition had given a fresh impetus to evangelical preaching in Scotland, notably in the case of Thomas Boston; but in 1720 the Assembly condemned it on the grounds that its teaching was contrary to the standards of the Church, both primary and secondary. Ministers were strictly prohibited and discharged from recommending it, and at the same time enjoined to warn their people into whose hands it might come not to read or use it. Once again those who were later to break away from the Church felt that the old evangel was being repudiated. In 1722 the twelve "Marrow-men", including Boston and the Erskines, drew up a remonstrance, protesting against the condemnation of The Marrow. When the full import of the document dawned upon the mind of the Assembly the twelve were called to the bar, and rebuked and admonished by the Moderator.

Such in brief outline was the state of affairs in 1732. In August that year Ebenezer Erskine had to preach the sermon at the meeting of the Synod of Perth and Stirling. A new movement was about to be launched and Erskine was the man to take the first step. John Ramsay says of him that he "was well qualified to head the multitude. He had a boldness and firmness which he exerted on all occasions in supporting



its favourite prejudices. Though no orator in Church courts, his pulpit eloquence was copious and keen, familiar and unpolished, perfectly suited to the taste and calibre of his admirers, who loved to hear him hunt a metaphor through all its mazes, or inveigh against the defections of the times. The loudness and harshness of his tones, joined to his gestures, accorded well with his inflammatory topics, and made a deep impression upon the lower classes of people, who regarded him as the champion of their rights and privileges. Neither did his blunt rustic manners hurt him in their esteem, as they were at that time much prepossessed against polished ministers" (14).

Ramsay's not altogether flattery<sup>ing</sup> account of Erskine helps us to picture the man who preached before the Synod of Perth and Stirling that August day in 1732. In the course of that sermon he ~~denounced~~ what he considered the prevailing evils of the day, in particular the action of the Church Courts in the matter of the settlement of ministers who were not acceptable to the congregations over which they were placed. For his plainness of speech he was censured by the Synod and later by the Assembly. This was in 1733. Together with the three others who were afterwards to form the Secession with him he protested against the Assembly's rebuke and admonition. The protest led to their suspension by the August Commission of Assembly; and the November Commission, finding that ~~had~~ they had in defiance of the August sentence continued to exercise their ministerial functions, loosed them from their charges

and declared them to be no longer ministers of the Church of Scotland. And so in the following month, as we have seen, the four constituted themselves a separate Presbytery.

The Church made many efforts to win them back, and indeed went very far in her endeavour to make their return as easy as possible. But all to no avail. On their separation the Seceders had intimated their appeal "unto the first free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland;" and until they could be sure that there was such an Assembly in the land they were determined to remain apart.

From the point of view of the Church such a state of affairs could not, of course, be allowed to continue indefinitely. The Seceders must either be in the Church, or out of it, so in 1739 they were summoned to the bar of the Assembly. In the interval their numbers had increased. They appeared as a constituted presbytery with their Moderator at their head, declined the jurisdiction of what they regarded as an unfaithful Church, and withdrew. A year later, on May 15th, 1740, they were, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, deposed from the office of the holy ministry, and prohibited and discharged from exercising the same or any part thereof within the Church of Scotland in all time coming. The breach was complete, but in the providence of God the Secession was to prove in many ways a blessing to Scotland.

In 1745 the Associate Presbytery became the Associate Synod with three Presbyteries; by that time the Secession embraced forty-three charges, thirty of which had ordained ministers. But when the Synod met in March of that year there appeared the first sign of that cleavage which was to split the body in two. The Presbytery of Dunfermline overtured the Synod asking them to take into consideration whether or not the Burgess Oaths of certain Scottish towns - Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Perth - were agreeable to the Word of God and to the received principles of the Secession Church founded thereupon. In 1744 the Secession Church had raised the renewing of the Covenants to the position of a term not only of ministerial but also of Christian communion in the admission of applicants to sealing ordinances. Now the members of the Dunfermline Presbytery, and doubtless others in the Church, were finding it difficult to reconcile the religious clause in these Burgess Oaths with the Covenants. Could a man accept both the Covenants and the Burgess Oath when in the latter there was the following clause :- "Heir I protest befor God and your Lordship, that I profess and allow with my haurt, the trew religion qlk at this present is publictlie preschit within this realm, and authorizit be the lawes thairof: I sall abyde therat and defend the samyn to my lifis end, renouncing the Roman religion callit papistrie" ? The terms of the Oath varied in different towns, but the form quoted, the Edinburgh Oath, was reckoned, according to Dr.

MacEwen, as the most offensive.

The point at issue was, Did the Oath carry with it an approval of the existing Establishment with all its doctrinal errors and violations of constitution; or did it simply bind the person taking it to an approval of the true religion without committing him to an approval of the particular manner in which it was professed in Scotland ?

It was on that rock that the Secession Church split. From 1745 to 1747 the Synod debated the question. At the meeting of Synod held in the latter year the matter was virtually decided by a vote which resulted in a considerable body of the members, including the Erskines, indicating that they regarded the Oath as compatible with the principles of the Secession, and twenty-three indicating that they were resolutely opposed to the taking of the Oath. Among the latter were Alexander Moncrieff, Adam Gib, and Thomas Mair of Orwell. Of the last named we shall hear more directly.

From that time onwards there were two Secession bodies in Scotland; these were one in doctrine, discipline, and government, and separated only over the interpretation of the religious clause in the Burgess Oath. Both claimed to be the Associate Synod, but to the world outside they were known as Burghers and Anti-Burghers. The story makes sad reading. As Mr. J.G. Fyfe has pointed out in a recent book, the feeling between them "was even more bitter than that between the Church and the Seceders, and, indeed, in 1750 the Anti-Burghers

excommunicated Ebenezer Erskine - he was 'cast out from the Communion of the Church of Christ, declared to be of those whom the Lord Christ commandeth to be holden of all and every one of the faithful as heathen men and publicans, delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus'" (15). "Both sections were incapable of compromise," says Dr. A.J. Campbell, "and pursued their opinions to their logical end; and church history contains no more ironical chapter than that which tells how Ebenezer Erskine, the founder of the Secession, who carried himself with so haughty and uncompromising a spirit towards his brethren of the Church of Scotland in 1733, was himself subjected by his own disciples to the 'greater' excommunication and solemnly handed over to Satan" (16). The eighteenth century diarist, John Ramsay, whom we have already had occasion to quote, says of this breach that it was not "easy for an impartial bystander to say which of them was the most culpable and implacable. From this time forth the Burghers and Anti-Burghers, as they were called, formed distinct and independent synods, which hated each other worse than the Jesuits did the Jansenists" (17).

It was in the Anti-Burgher section of the Secession that Fraser's theory of universal redemption was to create further dissension. A fairly full account of the proceedings is to be found in a pamphlet issued by a Committee of the Synod in Edinburgh in 1755, but as the case went on for at least two



years after the publication of the pamphlet in question it deals only with the earlier part of the case. It bears the title "The Proceedings of the Associate Synod, at Edinburgh, in March and August 1755, concerning the Rev. Thomas Mair, Minister of the Gospel at Orwell: in the Case of his dissenting from the Act of Synod, April 18, 1754, containing an Assertion of some Gospel-truths, in opposition to Arminian Errors upon the Head of Universal Redemption." The pamphlet also contains "an Introduction, and Notes upon some Parts of the Proceedings; as also, an Illustration of the Grounds upon which the Synod have laid him under the Censure of Suspension, - wherein the dangerous Errors vented by him are exposed." A later account is to be found in a book issued in Edinburgh in 1764, with the title The Case Laid Open. The sub-title is "An Essay to satisfy those who desire information anent the strange breach between the Associate Synod and Mr. Mair. With a Preface shewing the occasion of this Publication, and directing the Reader unto the Use thereof, for his Information." This book contains the "Protest of the Reverend Mr. Alexander Moncrieff, in the Case of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Mair, before the Associate Synod at Edinburgh, March 12th, 1755; and Mr. Mair's answers to the same; with the Synod's Notes on his Answers; and the Pages in his Reasons of Dissent referred to, where these Notes are answered."

The Rev. Thomas Mair of Orwell, round whom the controversy centred, was a nephew of the Rev. George Mair, who as we have

seen, became minister of the Second Charge of Culross in September 1698, the <sup>year before</sup> ~~month of~~ Fraser's death, but who seems to have been Fraser's colleague before that. While still a school-boy, young Mair had been employed by his uncle to transcribe the Ms. of Fraser's Treatise, and doubtless while engaged on that task had become familiar with its teaching. In later years the teaching in question, particularly Fraser's universalism, seems to have exercised a powerful influence over him. In fact he was generally thought to have been responsible for the publication in 1749 of the second part of the Treatise, though I have been unable to find any definite proof of this.

Fraser's theory of universal redemption was abhorrent to the Anti-Burghers, as one can well imagine from a study of their origins and principles. Many of them were devoted Marrow-men, and as the Rev. D. Beaton has pointed out, "Whatever objection may be found with the Marrow-men's mode of expression - and it must be said that their terms were not of the happiest kind - it is evident from their writings that they were firm believers in the doctrine of a definite (i.e. limited, as opposed to universal) atonement, and it could be as easily shown that, while steering clear of Arminianism, they managed no less successfully to steer clear of Amyraldism. In fact, what has been described by Dr. Smeaton as perhaps the best refutation of Amyraldism to be found in English is Adam Gil's Display of the Secession Testimony" (18).

But as Mr. Beaton goes on to point out, in after years the Marrow theology, in its teaching with reference to the Atonement, drifted by a process of development into what was known in the Secession Churches as the 'Double Reference Theory,' and gave rise to the Atonement Controversy. He continues, "In 1749 a work entitled Justifying Faith appeared. The work is usually attributed to Fraser of Brea. Its references to the Atonement were distinctly Amyraldian. The book was recommended by Mair, one of the Anti-Burgher ministers. He had not much of a following in his own Church, but in the Reformed Presbytery the new views gave rise to a bitter controversy that ended in the formation of a new Presbytery of two ministers and two elders who favoured these views. They published a defence of their position and the pamphlet was recommended by Mair. The General Associate Synod passed an 'Act concerning Arminian Errors,' condemning these views. Mair objected to this Act, and after being repeatedly dealt with by the Synod was deposed in 1757. It was in connection with this controversy that Adam Gib wrote his Illustration referred to above by Smeaton" (19). Mr. Beaton adds in a footnote that "Adam Gib in his Present Truth, II, 131, was suspicious that Mr. Mair had altered the text of Fraser's Treatise for his own purpose, but he may have been mistaken."

It was in April, 1754, that the Synod of the Anti-Burghers took into consideration the spread of the ~~Ar~~minian doctrine of universal redemption. The split in the Reformed Presbytery,

as we have seen, took place in the previous year, and had apparently alarmed many within the ranks of the Anti-Burghers. In the Synod the matter was raised by an overture from the Presbytery of Edinburgh in which it was represented as "a matter of public notoriety, that the Arminian scheme of universal atonement and redemption, as to purchase, was lately revived and industriously promoted, in somewhat of a new and insnaring form; and that this new flood of error, whereby the system of gospel-doctrine is very widely and perniciously attacked, did more and more threaten to overthrow the faith of some" (20). In its overture the Presbytery went on to propose to the Synod "that they might consider upon a proper course to be taken, for guarding the people under their inspection, and particularly the candidates for the holy ministry against the imminent danger from the said revival of Arminianism; and more especially that they might turn the point of gospel truth against the chief branches of this new mode of Arminianism, by asserting particularly the opposite doctrines of the Lord's word, which are contained in our Confession of Faith, and Catechisms" (21).

After the assertion, in the form of seven articles, of what it regarded as the truths of the gospel, the Presbytery concluded its overture with the prayer "that the Synod should assert these foregoing or like articles, with a general condemnation and rejection of all contrary errors, or of all tenets and opinions which are opposite unto. or inconsistent



with, the said articles of gospel truth; and with a general warning to all the people under their inspection, to beware of entertaining any contrary doctrines, particularly as they might find the same vented in any books or pamphlets which they got into their hands" (21). Fraser's Treatise is not specifically mentioned, but it is easy to read between the lines of the above overture that it was his theory of universal redemption, and the pamphlets which had been issued a few months earlier by the two branches of the Reformed Presbytery either to support or to denounce it, which had caused the perturbation in the breasts of the members of the Edinburgh Presbytery.

In view of later developments it is important to note how the Synod dealt with the overture. At their meeting in April, 1754, they agreed not to make any special examination of the alleged late revival of the Arminian doctrine of universal redemption; but to guard against the danger implicit in that doctrine they decided that after suitable revision the seven articles of gospel truth contained in the Edinburgh overture should be published, and this was in fact done soon after in the Act of the Associate Synod, containing an assertion of some gospel truths, in opposition to Arminian errors upon the head of universal redemption. The articles, as M'Kerrow gives them in outline, were :-

"1. That in the covenant of grace our Lord Jesus Christ became the federal head and representative of those only among mankind sinners, whom God hath out of



His mere good pleasure from all eternity elected unto everlasting life; and for them only He was made an undertaking surety;

"2. That our Lord Jesus Christ hath redeemed none others, by His death, but the elect only; because for them only He was made under the law, made sin, and made a curse; being substituted only in their room and stead, and having only their iniquities laid upon Him, or imputed unto Him; so that He did bear only their sins; for their sins only He laid down His life, and was crucified:

"3. That there is but one special redemption, by the death of Christ, for all the objects thereof: as He died in one and the same respect, for all those for whom in any respect He died;

"4. That the intercession of Christ is infallibly of the same extent, in respect of its objects, with the atonement and satisfaction made in His death: so that He actually and effectually makes intercession for all those for whom He laid down His life, or for whom He purchased redemption, that it may be fully applied to them in due course;

"5. That the death of Christ, as it is stated in the covenant of grace, hath a necessary, inseparable, certain, and infallible connexion with, and efficacy for the actual and complete salvation of all those for whom He died: so that redemption is certainly applied and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ purchased the same; all in whose stead He died being, in due course, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and glorified;

"6. That Christ and the benefits of His purchase cannot be divided; neither can these benefits be divided one from another: wherefore we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, or of the benefits procured by His death, only through the effectual application thereof to us by His Holy Spirit, working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling;

"7. That whereas there is a general, free, and unlimited offer of Christ, and salvation through Him, by the gospel unto sinners of mankind as such (upon the foundation of the intrinsic sufficiency of the death of Christ, His relation of a kinsman-redeemer to mankind sinners as such, and the promise of eternal life through Him to mankind sinners as such in the gospel),

with an interposal of divine authority in the gospel call, immediately requiring all the hearers thereof to receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as He is freely offered to them in the gospel; and whereas all the hearers of the gospel are thus privileged with an equal, full, and immediate warrant to make a particular application of Christ, with all His redemption and salvation, severally unto themselves, by a true and lively faith: so the gospel offer and call, containing the warrant of faith, cannot require or infer any universal atonement or redemption as to purchase; but are altogether consistent with and conformed unto the scripture doctrine of particular redemption, which is expressed in the six preceding articles." (22).

At almost every point these articles bear upon Fraser's teaching with regard to universal redemption.

It is at this stage that Mair comes upon the scene. John Ramsay said of him that he was "a man who seemed to have had the happiest talents for strife" (<sup>23</sup>~~22~~). While these seven articles were under scrutiny and consideration by the Synod he opposed some of them, expressing doubts about the second, fourth, and fifth, voting against the sixth, and declaring his dissatisfaction with the Act as a whole.

At the meeting of Synod in August of the same year he handed in a paper of dissent, in which, however, he found no particular fault with the Act, in any of its articles; his objection was based upon its being "evident and declared, that the Synod had framed their Act in opposition to Mr. Fraser's (of Brae) treatise on the grounds of faith; and particularly what he delivers therein concerning the extent of the death of Christ, and His purchase of common benefits" (<sup>24</sup>~~23~~).

At that meeting the Synod did nothing about Mair's dissent, but in the following March it was considered and

unanimously rejected on the ground that it contained no reasons affecting any of the articles in the Act of the previous year. Mair at this meeting presented a second paper with reasons of dissent but this too was rejected by the Synod who found it to be as vague and unsatisfactory as the first. In it Mair raised objections to the first five articles in the Act, but only in the case of the second did he descend from general to particular reasons of dissent. When pressed to elucidate what he meant by holding that "Christ died for all and every one of mankind sinners" he refused to give an explicit statement; he also refused to withdraw his dissent or to give an undertaking to refrain from uttering opinions inconsistent with the articles of doctrine set forth in the Synod's Act.

The next step taken by the Synod reveals how eager they were not only to discover exactly where Mair stood doctrinally, but also to be fair and just to him. In view of Mair's refusal to give a clear statement of his beliefs, the Rev. Alexander Moncrieff drew up a paper containing seven distinct articles which he believed to embody his opinions, as far as these could be ascertained from his papers and speeches. Moncrieff asked that "these shall be taken and reputed as the tenets and opinions which the Rev. Mr. Mair is holding against the several articles in the foressaid Act of Synod, in so far as he shall not forthwith refuse the same, with a plain and positive declaration of what else it is that he really holds,

in the place of each particular which he shall refuse" (25).

Moncrieff's laudable and ingenious effort to find out how and to what extent Mair differed from his brethren in the Synod was a failure, for Mair, after a day's consideration of Moncrieff's paper, neither expressly refused nor acknowledged the obnoxious opinions ascribed to him. The Synod, whose patience and restraint are noteworthy, were now inclined to proceed to stronger measures against him. A Committee was appointed to prepare an overture on the subject, and at a later sederunt this Committee reported that on examination Mair's dissent was found to contain, among other things, the following doctrine :-

"That besides the special objective destination and intention of our Lord's death, respecting the elect, there was some kind of general or universal objective destination and intention thereof, in the transactions of the new covenant: That in some sense Christ was made sin for all the hearers of the gospel, and made satisfaction for the sins of all those to whom He is exhibited by the gospel; yea, that in some sense Christ died for all mankind, or shed His blood for them, making a full payment of their debt, and a satisfaction of justice for their guilt, by some kind or manner of intention in His making satisfaction; and that this universal objective destination of the death of Christ, necessarily belongs to the ground upon which sinners may be invited to Christ, and necessarily belongs to the pleadsbleness of Christ's



satisfaction and righteousness, at the bar of law and justice; so that the sinner's plea, to be proponed and sustained at the bar of law and justice, is a claim of right to Christ's blood, arising from the aforesaid universal objective destination; and that an excluding all such concern in or claim to the death of Christ, as for the man in particular, until he believe, leaves no access for an applying faith: And that the purchase of Christ admits of a further and larger consideration, than is treated of in our standards" (26).

As Mair raised no objection to this document the Synod were justified in taking it as containing an accurate statement of his beliefs. They then proceeded to prohibit him "from teaching or venting any tenets or opinions contrary to the articles of truth, asserted in the Act of Synod dissented from; and particularly from venting or teaching the above and such other tenets or opinions, which were evidently subversive of their received standards of doctrine." Further, they "appointed him to evidence his falling from the teaching or venting of those tenets and opinions, by with drawing his paper of dissent against the next meeting of Synod; with certification that, if he should persist in refusing to do so, the Synod would find themselves obliged to proceed to censure him" (27). Mair's reply was that he could not be prevented from teaching what he believed to be the truths of God.

The next meeting of Synod was in August of the same



year (1755), and once more that matter was brought up, Mair being asked to disavow his tenets and withdraw his paper of dissent. In reply he dictated the following statement to the Clerk:- "That he had no freedom to fall from teaching those doctrines upon the matter, which are specified and condemned in the Synod's Act, according to his view of them; and that therefore he could not withdraw his dissent" (27). Naturally the Synod could not rest satisfied with an answer which amounted to a flat refusal to accept their ruling in the matter; but being anxious to show him every consideration they proposed that in the interval before their next meeting he should confer with a committee specially appointed for the purpose, and that in the meantime he should abstain from teaching the doctrines to which the Synod objected. Mair refused to agree to the proposal, and the Synod, realising at last that further leniency would serve no useful purpose, reluctantly resolved to take stronger measures with him. His doctrines, as set forth in his paper of dissent, were declared to be dangerous errors, subversive of those principles of gospel truth laid down from the Holy Scriptures in the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms; and because he refused to give any undertaking either to withdraw his paper, or to refrain from teaching his doctrines, they suspended him from the exercise of his ministry, warning him that if he did not give satisfaction they would at a future meeting proceed to a higher sentence and censure. Mair

protested against their decision.

A year was allowed to elapse before the matter was brought up again, but when it was revived at the meeting of Synod held in August, 1756, Mair was found to be as intransigent as ever. He frankly confessed that he had disregarded the sentence of suspension passed upon him the previous year; and to his former obnoxious statements he now proceeded to add two more :- "That our Lord Jesus Christ died as a surety-priest, in some sense, for reprobates - for Judas as well as for Peter;" and "That by His death He bought all mankind; the elect as His bride, and the rest of the world as His tools, for the glory of God and the good of the elect" (28). It will be noted how close his teaching was to that of Fraser.

By now, if not long before, it must have been evident to every member of the Synod that in the matter of the interpretation of the nature and extent of the Atonement Mair's position was totally irreconcilable with that held by his brethren; but the Synod, once again with commendable patience, proposed that a committee should be appointed to hold conference with him from time to time till the next meeting of Synod; at the same time they solemnly warned him that if by then his attitude remained unchanged they would have no alternative but to proceed to extreme measures against him.

When the Synod met in April, 1757, Mair was obviously

more confirmed than ever in his opinions; in fact he plainly indicated that even if the Synod were to grant him further time to consider the matter he had no intention of resiling from the position he had all along taken up. Without further delay the Synod proceeded to depose him from the office of the holy ministry, and to lay him under the sentence of the lesser excommunication. He protested against the sentence, and against the whole of the procedure in the case. He also protested once <sup>more</sup> ~~again~~ against the Synod's Act of 1754 with which the proceedings had originated.

Adam Gib's summary of the Mair case is worth quoting. "The Synod," he writes, "was evidently forced to go forward, with great reluctance, in their proceedings against Mr. Mair. Much time was spent upon tedious reasonings with him, at many sederunts, in all their meetings but one, through the course of three years; with a frequent employment of brethren, all along, in turns of prayer, for divine light and pity. And though they were very desirous of his renouncing these new tenets which he had espoused, yet they never absolutely required this, as the only satisfaction in which they could acquiesce: while he all along seemed unripe for being thus dealt with, by his labouring under a great confusion of thoughts upon the subject. But what they particularly and earnestly insisted for was, that he would keep such points to himself; or that he should drop his stated opposition to their Act, and should fall upon the venting of such

erroneous notions among the people; of which they required no other evidence than withdrawing his paper of dissent. So that, in this way, they were willing to exercise forbearance with him. And when all such endeavours proved fruitless, they could not stop short of the issue which has been explained, without suffering the banner of gospel truth to fall among them" (29).

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE WRITINGS OF ADAM GIB

Dr. James Walker, it will be remembered, held that the outstanding result of the publication of the 1749 Treatise on Faith was "the theological discussions it brought from the pen of Adam Gib, the ablest and most important, I imagine, of their day" (1). It is clear, therefore, that no consideration of Fraser's theory of universal redemption and its influence upon the Scottish Church and Scottish theology can be regarded as complete without some reference to Adam Gib and his writings, particularly those which took their origin in Gib's dislike of Fraser's teaching on this subject.

Gib was a curious individual. David Scott, the annalist of the Original Secession Church, calls him "the John Knox of the Secession," (2), and the title is not inappropriate for there is much in common between the doughty warrior of the sixteenth century and the uncompromising leader of the Anti-Burghers in the eighteenth. Born in Muckart in 1714, 'Pope Gib,' as he was later to be called, became minister of Bristo Street Secession congregation, Edinburgh, in 1741, having cast in his lot with the Seceders in 1735. During the Forty-Five he took an active part in support of the



Government, and raised several companies of volunteers from his own congregation; he is credited with having captured a rebel spy in the course of those months of unsettlement. A keen Secessionist he held that "the Seceders served themselves heirs to all the witnessing work in behalf of our Covenanted Reformation ever since the decline thereof in 1650." When the question of the Burgher Oath fell like an apple of discord into the Secession camp he adopted the views of those who maintained that the oath could not lawfully be taken, and soon became the acknowledged leader of the AntiBurgher section of the Synod. He was the author of fifteen separate publications, most of them being concerned with Secession, and in particular Anti-Burgher, witness and testimony. When dispossessed of the Bristo Street Church he ministered in one built for him in Nicolson Street. He died in 1788.

H.G. Graham, writing of the eighteenth century custom of making covenants or trysts with God, refers to Gib as "that uncompromising lover of all solemn covenants, whether private or national" (3). Dr. John Watson wrote of him: "Adam Gib was the dourest of the Seceders, and the dryest of theologians - though Dr. Walker, the historian of Scots theology, has a profound admiration for his ability - but Gib wrote his covenant with God in his own blood. When his father, being ~~depressed~~ displeased with the conduct of his eldest son, left his property to Gib, that high-minded gentleman asked his brother whether he would amend his life and live as his father had

desired, and on his brother declaring that he would, Gib tore up the will and handed back the property" (4). Dr. Walker, in the eulogy referred to, says of Gib that "he was an ecclesiastic of the second Reformation type. All its leading principles he had firmly grasped, or rather they had taken possession of him. A hard, dry man, fond of logic and formulas, he had an extraordinary intensity of character. He writes his covenant with God in the blood of his own veins. Though the world mocks, he dares to act strictly and sternly on the old Church doctrines .... he is one of the little known men of the past century by whom, I confess, I have been strongly impressed. Perhaps I over-estimate him; but to me there is something very remarkable about him. He is altogether a unique figure in that eighteenth century. He ruled his Antiburghers with a firm, strong hand; and I do not know but that an Antiburgher Synod was as difficult to rule as many a great empire: they tried rebellion once, but it utterly failed. A clear-headed man, with no imagination, plodding away in the old theologies, - I should suppose a dull preacher, save to persons of his own type, - given to formulas, - he had in him the elements of the enthusiast or the fanatic. He wrote, we are told, his first covenant with God in the blood of his own veins. Not without mellowness of soul withal .... Ultimus ecclesiasticorum ! I have sometimes been disposed to exclaim over him. And yet, full of the past, this singular man sowed many of the seeds of the ecclesiastical developments of our day" (5).

"One of the early stoops of the Secession Church," says Dr. John Macfarlane of Gib, "he had few equals and certainly no superiors as a logical and powerful polemic. The two volumes entitled The Present Truth which he published at a most convenient season prove him to be one of the gravest thinkers of his time, and one of the most fearless defenders of the faith. He was one of the giants in those days" (6). Principal John MacLeod has recently referred to Gib in terms which are worth quoting. After pointing out that when the Seceders split up into Burghers, or the Associate Synod, and Anti-Burghers, or General Associate Synod, the latter were distinctly the more militant of the two, and were for his lifetime dominated by the forceful personality of Gib, he continues : "It is curious that the settlement of such an ecclesiastical warrior in Edinburgh as its first Secession minister called forth a protesting pamphlet from the Cameronian side which spoke of the new minister as an intruder or usurper. They did not mince matters in those days. And Adam Gib could give as good as he got. He was a man of war from his youth, and he was a candid critic of the position taken up by the Cameronians. He may have been known to have been of this mind before he became a minister. So it was not so strange that a protest against his ministry came from their side. In a year or two he had a great part in drafting the Synod's Answers to Nairn's Reasons. Mr, Nairn, who had been a Seceder, thought it his duty to join the remnant of the

Hillmen and when he took action he gave in his reasons. The Synod's answer to these reasons sets forth the orthodox reply to what was looked upon as the right-headed extreme of the Anti-Government Party, as the Cameronians or the Old Dissenters were called" (7).

Of Gib's published works one or two have already been mentioned in the course of the present thesis. It will be remembered that in the Preface to the Reader in Fraser's Lawfulness and Duty of Separation, published in 1744, it was stated that the publication of the work at that time was regarded as highly suitable in view of the fond reception which Mr. George Whitefield, a priest of the Church of England, and his latitudinarian scheme, had met with. Two years earlier, in 1742, Gib had published a massive pamphlet with an almost equally massive title :- "Warning against countenancing the ministrations of Mr. G.W., together with an appendix wherein are shown that Mr. W. is no minister of Jesus Christ, that his call and coming to Scotland are scandalous, that his practice is disorderly, that his whole doctrine must be diabolical, so that people ought to avoid it from duty to God, to the Church, and to themselves." In that pamphlet Gib wrote of Whitefield's ministry :- "The horror of this scene strikes me almost dumb. I must halt and give way to some awful ideas that cannot find vent in language .... My spirit is like to freeze with horror, impotent of speech" (8).

As far as Whitefield was concerned Gib and Fraser, or rather

Fraser's publisher, for Fraser died more than forty years before the breach between Whitefield and the Seceders took place, were at one. In his Lawfulness and Duty of Separation Fraser had dealt faithfully with those who conformed to the Church of England; in his Warning Gib dealt no less faithfully with a priest of that Church, and all who countenanced his ministrations.

In his later writings, however, Gib is by no means at one with Fraser. In 1755 he edited Owen on Redemption with the purpose of counteracting the teaching ascribed to Fraser. It is the introduction to this work that Dr. M'Crie referred to in his letter to Dr. Watson of Burntisland in which he dealt with Gib's attitude to Marrow teaching (9). Owen, it is hardly necessary to point out, had been one of the most prominent opponents of Arminianism in the seventeenth century.

But Gib's real attitude to Fraser and his teaching appears most clearly with the publication in 1774 of his magnum opus - The Present Truth: A Display of the Secession Testimony in the Three Periods of its Rise, State, and Maintenance. This is, says J.C. Johnston, "a work of great labour and deservedly regarded of very high value, exhibiting as it does a connected view of the facts of Secession history, and containing a noble defence of Secession principles" (10). In his Preface to the work Gib states: "The first generation of Seceders is now mostly off the field: and the new generation is ready to lose sight, in a great measure, of the



cause which they possess, partly through want of ready information. It is therefore considered, not only as a piece of justice to that cause before the world, (and a necessary information for posterity), - but also as a matter of duty to the friends of it, that such a Display be made thereof, as is now proposed" (11).

The Display is in two volumes. The first of these deals with the rise and state of the Secession testimony, a detailed account being given of the origins of the Secession, and many of the documents, acts, etc., connected with those early years are given. Ebenezer Erskine's momentous sermon before the Synod of Perth and Stirling on 10th October, 1732, is printed as an appendix.

The second volume is concerned with the maintenance of the Secession testimony. In what is termed "Progression V" (pp. 131-191) Gib deals with "Arminian Errors, upon the head of Universal Redemption." There is also an Appendix concerning the extent of redemption (pp. 273-302).

In Progression V. Gib begins with the Synod's Act concerning Arminian Errors upon the head of Universal Redemption. "A book was published in the year 1749," he says, "entitled A Treatise on Justifying Faith, and ascribed to Mr. James Fraser of Brae, sometime minister of the Gospel at Culross, though none were known of, who can ascertain Mr. Fraser's concern in that book. The publisher indeed (a pewterer in Edinburgh) declares in his preface to it, that it was

published without any alterations, which may be seen by the copy from which it was printed, it being prepared for the press by the author's own hand. Yet this publisher could not be ignorant, (as he was dealt with in vain by one of the writers of that copy, to delay the publication till Mr. Fraser's manuscript should be found, or till the copy should be got revised), that there was not one word of the alledged author's hand-writing in the copy which he used, but that it had been transcribed, partly by a boy and girl when at school (viz. by Mr. Thomas Mair, and one of his sisters; as he acknowledged to the writer of this account), partly by he (or they) knew not whom, from he (or they) knew not what other copy, a good many years after Mr. Fraser's death; and the world has therefore no reason to take his word for it, that he published even from this copy without any alterations, especially considering his high-flown zeal for the <sup>n</sup>sigular doctrines which it contains.

"In that book, and chiefly in a long Appendix to the fifth chapter of it, the Arminian point of universal redemption is alrgely set forth, but in somewhat of a new form, as the author had found himself obliged, in answering objections against that doctrine, to make it up by some very horrible positions." (12).

Gib then gives a very detailed summary of Fraser's theory of universal redemption, ending wih the words: "Such is the substance of that new scheme, largely amplified and inculcated,

after a very shocking manner, in the book referred to" (13). He goes on to say that though the minds of some people, in different parts of the country, were gradually becoming infected by the errors in Fraser's Treatise, the book being industriously handed about and recommended, yet it was unlikely that any hurt would have followed from it among those under the inspection of the Associate Synod had not its peculiar doctrine been set forth in another publication in the year 1753. He refers, of course, to the publication by a section of the Reformed Presbytery of The True State, which has already been dealt with in an earlier chapter in this thesis.

"What was called the Reformed Presbytery," he says, "came to be engaged in warm debates upon the Arminian doctrine of the aforesaid book, which issued in a rupture among them, owing to some unruly and desperate efforts which were made on behalf of that doctrine by Mr. James Hall, one of their ministers, in some particular connexion with the publisher of the book. When the said doctrine was brought to a question among them, five members (two ministers and three elders) voted against it; as another of their ministers, detained by indisposition, had sent up his judgment on the same side. But Mr. Hall, with two elders, voted for the condemned doctrine; and these three members, with the moderator who took their part, did thereupon assume the character of the Reformed Presbytery, in exclusion of the majority of the unquarreled voters on the other side" (14).

Gib goes on to say that this new Presbytery, wholly constituted on the ground of universal redemption, and whose absurd constitution was good enough for their cause, was soon afterwards dissolved through Hall's colleague taking a course by himself. Thus after one appearance, like a baleful meteor, it vanished. The brief appearance to which he alludes was the publication of The True State, to which reference has already been made (page 593 of this thesis). In his references to this work Gib is very scathing. "The historical part of this pamphlet," he says, "afforded strong presumptions, that truth could not follow in the doctrinal part, the history being chiefly made up of self-evident and atrocious calumnies, abundantly poured out upon old Mr. M'Millan. And the doctrine which follows, taught with a high degree of sophistical ignorance and presumption, is a general adopting and embellishing of the new scheme contained in the aforesaid book, without any exception, yet in utter silence about the horrible positions by which the author made it up; but all improved in a subservience to the Antigovernment scheme, to which that book gives a general countenance by teaching that 'the magistrate's power doth flow from Christ as Mediator.'

"This pamphlet - the doctrinal part of which did run in a very plausible and deceitful strain - being of a more easy purchase, and so of a more ready circulation, did threaten much worse effects than the aforesaid book, among those under the inspection of the Associate Synod; as soon took place

upon some few, with the appearance of imminent hazard as to many. And this was greatly contributed unto by accounts which had been privately circulated in some places for a good time back concerning Mr. Thomas Mair, as a favourer of that book; but especially by some recommendations which he had made of the above-mentioned pamphlet, abstracting from the antigovernment principles which it contains. Upon the whole, there was a most threatening appearance of confusions ready to break out in Seceding congregations, from a corrupting or jumbling of people's judgments, by this new delusion; but the timely check which the Synod gave to it was very remarkably blessed, for recovering and confirming their people, with a preventing of more general distractions among them" (15).

Gib gives a detailed account of the Synod's handling of the Mair case, but as we have already dealt at length with this in Chapter XXI. it is unnecessary to say more about it here. The concluding section of the "Progression", however, is of importance as it deals with the grounds upon which the Synod opposed Mair and his doctrine; it also reveals Gib's own attitude to the theory of universal redemption as taught by Fraser and adopted by Mair.

The objective extent of Christ's death is first dealt with. On this head Gib says that Mair's doctrine was that "besides the special objective destination and intention of our Lord's death respecting the elect, there was some kind of general or universal objective destination and intention thereof, in the



transaction of the new covenant; that in some sense Christ was made sin for all the hearers of the gospel, and made satisfaction for the sins of all those to whom He is exhibited by the gospel; yea, that in some sense Christ died for all mankind, or shed His blood for them, making a full payment of their debt, and a satisfaction to justice for their guilt, by some kind or manner of intention in His making satisfaction" This is of course exactly the theory which Fraser propounds in his Appendix to the 1749 Treatise. On this theory, according to Gib, Christ died equally for all as far as the manner of His dying is concerned, though as to the end for which He died He died unequally for different persons. But is there warrant for such teaching in Scripture, or is it in accordance with the subordinate standards of the Church? No, replies Gib, for "it means nothing less, in its real nature and tendency, than to unhinge and make void the whole mystery of the gospel" (16).

That this is so is evident from the fact that it breaks the whole chain of salvation through the blood of Christ for it destroys any necessary or certain connection between His death and the salvation of those for whom He died. Again, it blots out the peculiar character of His death as a sufficient and effectual ransom for it implies that something more is required to procure or secure the redemption of men. It abolishes the peculiar capacity, i.e. as a complete surety, in which He died, for apparently in the case of some a further

surety is required. It degrades and overthrows His priesthood for His atonement and His intercession are no longer regarded as being co-extensive, as full priesthood implies. It brings reproach upon the infinite justice of God for if Christ gave full satisfaction for all how is it that God still requires satisfaction from a certain number? It disparages the love of God in holding that that love fails with respect to the greater part of those for whom Christ is said to have died. And finally it dethrones the sovereign grace and wisdom of God for it maintains that the purchase of redemption greatly exceeds the application of it; further, if the purchase be regarded as condition<sup>al</sup>, man's free-will is brought in and God's grace disparaged, while if be regarded as absolute the divine grace is proved to be weak and insufficient; the only alternative is that "Christ died for all mankind, with no view to the salvation, but only to procure the deeper damnation of the far greatest part of them; and thus the most desirable covenant of grace would be turned rather unto a most dreadful covenant of wrath and hatred" (17). And that, as we have seen, is very much what Fraser held.

Gib now proceeds to consider the gospel call. Here Meir's doctrine, he says, is "that some universal objective destination of the death of Christ, as having in some sense died for all mankind, necessarily belongs to the ground upon which sinners may be invited to Christ; and that an excluding all such concern in or claim to the death of Christ as for

the man in particular until he believe, leaves no access for an applying faith" (18). This of course is precisely Fraser's teaching. But, says Gib, neither in the Scriptures nor in the subordinate standards of the Church is ~~any~~ hint given that sinners are to be told, as a ground for their faith, that Christ died for all and each of them. He recalls the Synod's Act of 1754 which in its seventh article~~s~~ declared that the Gospel offer and call proceeded "upon the foundation of the intrinsic sufficiency of the death of Christ; His relation of a kinsman-redeemer to mankind-sinners as such; and the promise of eternal life to mankind-sinners as such, in the Gospel" (19).

Christ's intrinsic sufficiency, he holds, consists in His offering the utmost that law and justice could require for the repairing of the breach of the covenant of works; though He came to redeem only a part of mankind yet He had to repair the whole breach for nothing less would have sufficed to save even one soul. As kinsman-redeemer He holds both in His person and in His offices "an equal and undistinguished relation to mankind-sinners as such". And in the promises of the Gospel there is an absolute offer of justification and eternal life through Christ to mankind-sinners. These, says Gib, and not any theory that Christ died for all men, are the proper grounds of the Gospel offer. "The sum of the matter is this," he concludes: "That the Lord is pleased to gather His elect from among others, by such a dispensation of the gospel as takes no more notice of them than others. All the peculiar respect

which the purchased redemption has to them, all the particular respect which Christ had to them in His death, is altogether abstracted from, in the dispensation of the gospel. The glorious Redeemer, with His plenteous redemption, is equally set forth to all by the gospel, for being received and rested upon, according to the present revelation and exhibition to every one, not according to what views were had of particular persons, in the original providing of such a Redeemer and redemption. And this unlimited method of dispensation is what the Lord blesseth for gathering in His elect; while they are gathered in upon no other ground, by no other invitation or welcome, than what is common to them with all other hearers of the gospel, who therefore must be left inexcusable under an heinous aggravation of their guilt and punishment" (20). In language, if not in substance, Gib, it will be noted, comes very near to Fraser, particularly in his last sentence.

This being the proper ground of the Gospel offer, see, says Gib, how pernicious the new teaching of Mair (and Fraser) really is. It actually means that men are driven in the end to find a ground for their faith not in the revelation of God's grace but in the decree of election; it makes a wide attack upon the sovereignty of God, and tends to lead people away from paying any immediate regard to His will; while pretending to give a clear and rational account of the general call in the Gospel, and to make good sense of it, it really turns it into gross nonsense and absurdity; it leads men to build their

confidence not upon Christ's atonement as exhibited in the Gospel but upon some idea of it as particularly designed and intended for them; instead of making the Gospel more free and full than it is supposed to be in the doctrine of particular redemption, it actually takes away the truth of the Gospel and fills men's heads with vain imaginations; and finally, it leaves no true or solid ground for faith to build upon, destroying, as it does, any necessary or certain connection between Christ's death and salvation.

With regard to the warrant or ground of faith Mair's doctrine, according to Gib, is "that some universal objective destination of the death of Christ, as having in some sense died for all mankind, necessarily belongs to the pleadableness of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness at the bar of law and justice; so that the sinner's plea, to be proposed and sustained at the bar of law and justice, is a claim of right to Christ's blood, arising from the foresaid universal objective destination" (21). This means, says Gib, that faith's warrant for applying the blood of Christ lies in a right to that blood as having been shed for all men in each of their names; doctrine, he adds, which is plainly subversive of the principles contained in the Scriptures, in the Confession of Faith, and in the Catechisms.

Over against Mair's contention Gib, along with the Synod in its Act of 1754, holds that the true warrant of faith does not lie in any particular objective destination of Christ's



satisfaction and righteousness, or in any particular objective intention wherewith He made and fulfilled the same, but wholly in His glorious person and offices, with His satisfaction and righteousness, as freely and equally set forth by the Gospel to all the hearers thereof, with His gracious call and command for each of them to come over by faith unto this glorious foundation; and with absolute promises of justification and eternal life through Him to mankind-sinners as such in the Gospel, the possession of which blessings is to be certainly obtained in this way of believing.

In the final section of the Progression Gib deals with the doctrine of the Church's Standards with reference to the purchase of Christ. Mair held that the purchase of Christ admits of a farther and larger consideration than is treated of in the Church's Standards. But that, says Gib, simply means that he regarded these Standards as very defective, very useless, and very erroneous. Very defective, because on his theory their teaching requires not merely to be explicated but to be added to. Very useless, because if his theory is to be accepted they cease to be of value as tests of orthodoxy and soundness in the faith. And very erroneous, because if Mair is right they can no longer be regarded as saying all that ought to be said on so weighty a matter as the death of Christ.

Summing up his argument against the theory of universal redemption Gib asserts that Scripture affords no ground for it

though isolated texts may seem to support it - but then, as he points out, there are isolated texts which give even more countenance to a still more wicked Arminian doctrine, i.e. the power of man's free-will in conversion, which "goes natively along with the universal point." Again, while universal redemption may seem to be a more reasonable doctrine than particular redemption its real effect is so to extend Christ's death as to make it vain for any, instead of applicable to all. Particular redemption, on the other hand, does not, as some suppose, detract from the sufficiency of Christ's death for the faith of all gospel-hearers; nor is it necessary in order to establish that sufficiency to hold, as Mair does, that Christ's death was appointed for all. Mair teaches that Christ made a purchase of all mankind, and that there is a universality of redemption as to purchase, but of the illustration which he uses in this connection - Fraser's illustration of the jewel and the cabinet - Gib says that no man can find any real comfort in believing, not that he belongs to the jewel, but that he is more likely to belong to the cabinet which contains it. "And what satisfying claim, what real comfort can be found here, seeing that worthless cabinet or box is only purchased for being cast into the fire when once the jewel is taken out of it ?" (22).

The Judicial Testimony, Gib says in conclusion, has the following clause in direct opposition to the new scheme of universal redemption:- "The Presbytery did and hereby do

acknowledge, declare and assert that the Eternal Son of God, who was made manifest in the flesh, did in our nature, as the second Adam, the public head and representative of elect sinners, and the undertaking surety for them, yield a perfect obedience to the law as a covenant of works, in the room and stead of elect sinners; and that, in their room and stead alone, He bore the whole of that punishment threatened in the law, and incurred by the breach of it" (23). In the Act Concerning the Doctrine of Grace, which Mair accepted, "universal redemption as to purchase," is expressly called "a doctrine which the Presbytery rejects and condemns, as contrary to the Scriptures, and our Confession and Catechisms" (23). Yet what is that but an express rejection and condemnation of the sum and substance of Mair's new scheme, which according to Gib is "That the free, unlimited and universal offer of Christ in the gospel to sinners of mankind as such is inconsistent with particular redemption; or That God the Father His making a deed of gift unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe on His Son shall not perish but have everlasting life, infers an universal atonement or redemption as to purchase" ? (24).

Gib has a thirty-page Appendix Concerning the Extent of Redemption in which he deals fairly exhaustively with Fraser's theory. In a footnote to the first page he says: "The writer of this Display received a letter from the Reverend Mr. Thomas Mair, concerning what is called Brae's Scheme, dated the 26th

of October 1753, to which he returned an answer, dated the 3d of January 1754; and this Appendix is the latter half of that answer, only with the alteration of epistolary expressions, and with a division of it into sections, under corresponding titles; which was thought proper to be exhibited in this place, notwithstanding any coincidence of it with the Illustration of the Synod's proceedings in the case of Mr. Mair" (25).

After quoting a number of passages from the Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, in which the orthodox doctrine with reference to the extent of redemption is set forth, Gib asserts that Fraser's theory is in flat contradiction to this doctrine. He repeats some of the arguments already used in the body of the book. First, he denies that Scripture as a whole justifies any theory of universal redemption though this and the other four Arminian articles - "against the doctrines of particular and absolute election, the impotence of man's will in conversion, the efficacy of God's grace therein, and the final perseverance of the saints" (26) - may seem to receive support from certain passages.

Next, he points out that while Fraser holds that in his theory he does not go contrary to the doctrine of the Confession yet he is forced to confess that he does speak "differently" from it, e.g. in making use of the distinction between what he calls the common and the special reference of the death of Christ. To Gib it is clear that there is an

irreconcilable contradiction between Fraser's theory and the Confession; while, for example, the latter says that none but the elect are redeemed by Christ, Fraser holds that all men are redeemed by Him though in the end only the elect are to be saved.

Again, Gib asks how anyone can hold that Christ made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, became obedient unto death, was made a curse, was reviled, was bruised, suffered the whole vengeance of the law-curse, only for the end and purpose that the greater part of those for whom He is supposed to have died should be brought under a more dreadful damnation, or in other words that they should be transferred from the hell of law-wrath to a hotter hell of gospel-wrath. It is certain, says Gib, that gospel-despisers bring upon themselves a heavier condemnation and punishment than others, but no one but Fraser has ever held that this was the end and intentional product of the covenant of grace.

Further, what real comfort, what solid foundation for faith, can be found in this new scheme of Fraser's ? There is no comfort, and no basis for a sure faith, in a theory which holds that in the case of many for whom He is said to have died Christ has in store nothing but a more terrible punishment than would have been their lot if He had not died at all.

Over against this, to him, utterly unscriptural and unsatisfying scheme Gib sets what he calls the glorious and sure ground of faith which men have in the revelation of Christ's death as exhibited in the Standards of the Church. The doctrine



of the Standards, he points out, has already been vindicated in the controversy with the Arminians, and to his mind Fraser's scheme is just the old Arminianism revived and given a show of Scriptural warrant. This new theory does grave injury to the conception of God's grace which is found in the Gospel. It turns men's eyes away from the things which are revealed there - the only sure ground for faith - and bids them base their confidence upon the secret things which belong only to God. It diverts sinners from regarding the true nature and value of the atonement made in Christ's death. It propounds vain and useless theories about the blood of Christ being of sufficient worth and value to have atoned for the sins of devils as well as of men, if God had so willed. It subverts the true faith of the Lord's people and substitutes a new faith in its room, a new theory stripped of all the divine mysteries of the old, and appealing mainly to the reason. It offers a new ground for faith to build upon, viz. the statement that Christ died for all, but the new ground turns out to be very insecure after all for men discover that no real faith can be built upon it. It attempts to state the gospel offer in a new way which however is soon found to be vain and delusive.

"Upon the whole," says Gib, "it is very evident, that though the new scheme is given out, even with arrogant assurance, as being the only proper way of warranting or accounting for the general and free offers of the gospel,

yet all the gospel-offers which can proceed upon this scheme prove to be a mere chaos of absurdity and self-contradiction, which tend to lead sinners out of the plain way of the gospel, so as to leave them in the waste howling wilderness of corrupt reasonings and inventions" (27).

Gib now turns to the orthodox doctrine of particular redemption as contained in the Standards of the Church; it is to him much superior to Fraser's universal redemption. In it, he asserts, no account is taken, in the preaching of the Gospel, of the distinction between elect and reprobate, for that distinction does not effect the grounds of faith. By it all the hearers of the Gospel are equally bound to betake themselves to Christ without pausing to consider whether they partake of the special redemption, or only of the common redemption - to use the distinction which Fraser draws. By it Christ's death is not set forth as being in any sense productive of damnation but only of salvation. By it Christ crucified is regarded as having made an absolute purchase, not only of redemption and salvation objectively considered, but likewise of all subjective grace, particularly saving faith, through which all His other purchase must become effective. By it He is set forth as the glorious applier of all that He has purchased, by the efficacious working of His Holy Spirit. In it, finally, there is no ground for discouragement, but rather a strong excitement and encouragement to duty.

In this Appendix, as in the body of the work, Gib goes into great detail in stating Fraser's theory, which on the whole he presents with commendable impartiality. He is also at pains to state what he regards as the orthodox position. In this sketch only the bare outline of his argument has been given, but it may be sufficient to show that Gib has placed his finger upon the salient weaknesses of Fraser's theory, and in particular upon its lack of real warrant in Scripture, its groundless claim to be more reasonable or rational than the orthodox doctrine, and its undermining of the only real grounds of saving faith. Gib, of course, is very critical of Fraser's curious and repugnant thought of Gospel-wrath and vengeance.

## C H A P T E R    XXIII

### SOME LATER RESULTS

It may be asked, Did Fraser's teaching with reference to the extent of the Atonement have any definite effect upon the later history of the Scottish Church ? Is it possible to trace the influence of his theory of universal redemption upon the development of religious thought in this country ? It must frankly be confessed that it is difficult to answer these questions in any precise manner, for the truth seems to be that whatever influence his teaching may have had in Scotland after the middle of the eighteenth century, that influence was of so indirect a nature as to make it almost impossible to assign to him the credit, or the blame, involved. Nevertheless it is a fact that many of the questions which ruffled the peace of the Scottish Church in the earlier part of the nineteenth century were precisely those which he had raised in his writings, and for which he had proposed his own not very satisfactory answers. It is also a fact that generally speaking the positions taken up by the accused in the heresy trials of that period were closely akin to that occupied by him, though, of course, without his extravagances.

Before, however, the eighteenth century ended, as Principal John MacLeod has pointed out in a recent article, there was among the Seceders at least one minister "who after a fashion dared to hint that there was something to be said in favour of Universal Redemption, either Fraser's scheme or perhaps rather the teaching of the Amyraldian French School. Or he might perhaps have had an eye to the type of Universal Redemption associated with the name of Davenant. This Seceder was George Thomson of Rathillet in Fife who ministered among the Burghers. He had been a schoolmaster with Mr. Mair at Orwell and imbibed his teaching. When Mr. Mair was condemned by the Anti-Burghers his schoolmaster became a Burgher, and in 1782 he published a tract in which he aired his views on Redemption. He did this in a somewhat cautious manner. It was a hint rather than an assertion. These are his words:- 'The question then is, Though there be a speciality in the death of Christ respecting an elect world; whether there is a universality in it respecting the whole world, etc.' Unless I mistake, this George Thomson became a preacher among the New Light Reformed Presbyterians who held to a double reference of the Lord's redemptive work on Fraser's Scheme. He joined this body in 1783. But Thomson's course was altogether a very erratic one, and the fact that he held such a position did not affect the general state of things among the Seceders. They continued through the 18th century to be Old School Evangelical Calvinists" (1).



Theories of Universalism and Double Reference did not, of course, originate with Fraser, nor did they disappear when his writings ceased to trouble Scottish Ecclesiastical waters. In his Confessions of the Church of Scotland Dr. C.G. M'Crie, dealing with the Row case, points out that long before M'Leod Campbell's time there were Calvinists who were also Universalists. According to him, "most, if not all, advocates of a limited Atonement have held the infinite value and race-wide reference of Christ's sacrifice for sin. Some have availed themselves of a scholastic formula and have asserted that Christ died sufficiens pro omnibus, efficaciter pro electis. And all Calvinists have recognised certain advantages or benefits conferred upon the human race by the atoning death of the Lamb of God. This recognition supplies a warrant for saying that, in a general way, Christ died for all men, that, as the Marrow men of the eighteenth century loved to put it, He is God's deed of gift to mankind sinners. And so from the time of Cameron in France, Amyraut in Holland, and of Baxter in England there have been Calvinists who have also been Universalists, in that sense, to that extent. The framers of the Westminster Confession were thoroughly at home in all the discussions in which the divines just named took part, much more so than Dr. Cameron ever became. They did not concern themselves to affirm a limited Atonement by denying that Christ died for all men. They took a more effectual and a more accurate way of stating

the Calvinistic position. They separated the impetration or purchase from the application by Redemption. Their position was that, whatever may hold good regarding the impetration, only those elected have the Redemption applied to them, are effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and finally glorified" (2).

Of the Double Reference theory Fraser was one of Scotland's earliest and most famous exponents, and that theory continued to have adherents long after his time. Macdonald, in his Covenanters in Moray and Ross, first published in 1875, when referring to Fraser's 1749 Treatise, says that "it ought, I suppose, to be held as the historical progenitor of the doctrine of the Double Reference of the Atonement understood to be held by a majority of the ministers of the United Presbyterian Church, as well as by others" (3). Professor T.M. Lindsay said that "the doctrine of Amyraut has maintained a firm hold on many evangelical Calvinists since his day. It was professed by Baxter, Vines, and Calamy in the days of the Westminster Assembly. It was not, as we can learn from the minutes, meant to be excluded by the definitions in the Westminster Confession. It was taught by Professor Balmer and Brown within the Secession Church in Scotland. It is part of much modern evangelical theology" (4). And a still more recent writer, in a passage which has already been quoted in this thesis (pp. 543,544), while emphasising that the Marrowmen were firm believers in the doctrine of a

definite or limited atonement and managed to steer clear both of Arminianism and Amyrældism, goes on to admit that in after years by a process of development the Marrow theology on this point of atonement - particular or universal - drifted into what was known in the Scottish Secession Churches as the Double Reference Theory of the Atonement and gave rise to the Atonement Controversy (5). It has also to be noted that the central question of The Marrow - "To whom and on what terms is salvation offered?" - occupied the minds in the early nineteenth century of such men as Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, John M'Leod Campbell, and Edward Irving.

It is hard to say how far, if at all, Fraser and his writings influenced the men whose names have just been mentioned or the course of the Atonement controversy in the Secession Church, but as has already been pointed out the questions with which he had been concerned were precisely the same in most cases as those which were very much alive in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Erskine of Linlathen, at least in the later developments of his teaching, went far beyond anything that Fraser would have been willing to accept as in accordance with Scripture or the Church's Subordinate Standards, but to begin with his position was not unlike that of the Appendix to the 1749 Treatise, though Erskine, of course, had no place in his theology. at any stage of his spiritual pilgrimage, for Fraser's peculiar theory of Gospel-wrath. Without altogether

rejecting the Federal theology Erskine held a mystical theory of Christ's Divine Headship, according to which our Lord suffered not as the substitute of some who were elected from all eternity, but in the capacity of Head and Representative of the race, a relationship which he held independently of the facts of sin and satisfaction. He believed that a universal and unconditional pardon is the true and essential teaching of Christianity; whether men believe the good news of forgiveness or not, the pardon is theirs. If they believe the good news then they enter into the joy of the pardon here and now, and realise the tranquillising, purifying power of that gracious fact; but the essential thing is that whatever their attitude to it may be the pardon is theirs.

Erskine's views on this subject are to be found in his Doctrine of Election published in 1837, but much earlier than that his mind had been powerfully drawn by the thought of universalism, which C.G. M'Crie calls "the hall-mark of Linlathen." He believed that there was a universal election in Christ who is the original foundation and ground of man's being, and is actually in every man, the Head and Root of the whole race. "There is a universal purpose of God regarding the human race, and that purpose is to make every human being partaker of His own blessedness by making all partakers in His own holiness. In the carrying out of this intention God educates every human being. For Erskine the thought of life and all its experience, society and all its combinations,

being formed by God to be a school for the discipline and education of the individual had a strong and growing fascination. At one time he viewed the human race as on probation, but latterly he abandoned the idea of probation and adopted that of education. 'We are not in a state of trial, we are in a process of education, directed by that eternal purpose of love which brought us into being.'" (6).

"The patience and persistence of the Divine Teacher were ever present to the devout spirit of Thomas Erskine," Dr. M'Crie continues. "The longer he brooded over the matter the more it was borne in upon him that in the case of some the Divine education is continued beyond this life. Seeing a large proportion of the human race die in infancy, that of those who reach manhood and womanhood there are many who cannot be said to have received any education, and that of those who fare better not one in a million appears to benefit by what is received, he was convinced that the divine education does not terminate on this side the grave. It was natural and inevitable that the man who believed there has been a universal election of the human race in Christ and that there is a divine education of every individual member composing it should complete his creed with a belief in universal restoration. Erskine certainly did so. Starting in early life with a hope of the ultimate salvation of all, by the time he was fifty years of age he had reached the conviction that the process of spiritual culture, continued beyond this life, will go on



until every human soul is brought back to God. It seemed to him almost blasphemous to suppose that the Creator will throw from Him into everlasting darkness a creature capable of His own blessedness because it has resisted His gracious purposes during the natural period of life on earth" (7).

As early as 1827, when he was in his thirty-eighth year, and still, as he himself thought, perfectly orthodox in his views, Erskine gave utterance in several letters to private friends to the hope of a final restitution of the race. To one friend he wrote: "I have a hope (which I would not willingly think contrary to the revelation of mercy) of the ultimate salvation of all." And to another: "You know the universality of my hope for sinners. I hope that He who came to bruise the serpent's head, and to destroy the works of the devil, will not close his labours of love till every particle of evil introduced into this world has been converted into good." Such views were, of course, far beyond anything that Fraser ever taught.

John M'Leod Campbell, Erskine's great friend, never went as far as Erskine in his thought of final restitution, and so may be regarded as remaining closer to Fraser in his view of the extent of the Atonement. To him religion was something more, or rather something other, than a system of doctrine; it was a conscious personal relation with God, the Father of all His children. He believed that the Atonement was for all the sons of Adam, thereby placing himself in

apparent contradiction to the Westminster Confession with its doctrine of election. "I hold," he said at his trial, "the doctrine of Universal Atonement to be the doctrine of Scripture .... I hold and teach that Christ died for all men .... that those for whom He gave Himself unto God for a sweet-smelling savour were the children of men without exception and without distinction." To his thought of the extent of the Atonement he added a doctrine of assurance - not the assurance of personal salvation, as his opponents declared, but the assurance of the reality of God's love to the believer. He spoke not of Christ satisfying Divine justice, but of Christ making confession to God on behalf of men. To God's condemnation of sin Christ says 'Amen,' and thus makes reconciliation possible; and this He does, not for a limited number, but for all men. (8).

M'Leod Campbell began by seeking for a Scripture foundation for the assurance which he held to be of the essence of faith. This foundation he found in believing that Christ had died for all men and had become God's gift to every human being, and so he began to preach universal atonement and pardon through the blood of Christ. While others preached, Believe in the forgiveness of your sins, and they will be forgiven, he proclaimed, Believe in the forgiveness of your sins because they are forgiven; believe that Christ died for you because He died for all mankind. In 1830 this new message of his led to his appearance at the bar of the

Presbytery of Dumbarton to answer a charge of holding and promulgating that assurance was of the essence of faith, and also the tenet of universal atonement and pardon, both of which opinions were declared to be contrary to the Holy Scriptures and to the Confession of Faith.

At that stage his thoughts on the Atonement were very crude and hardly consistent. He claimed that in saying that the atoning work of Christ was of universal import, he did not mean to assert that it actually saved every man, but only that it made salvation possible for every man. When he spoke of universal pardon, also, he intended to teach no more than that the barriers which prevented free return to God had been removed in the case of all men without exception. As to assurance of faith, he did not maintain, as was alleged, that all Christians enjoyed an unbroken consciousness of well-being and peace; but he did maintain that a saving trust in God involved, of its very nature, a glad confidence on the part of the saved that they were in fact reconciled to the Father, and were entirely secure of future blessedness. This confidence might, indeed, suffer periods of eclipse; and such times of darkness did not imply for believers the loss of status as redeemed children of God. They were, however, of the nature of sin, inasmuch as they were not of the nature of faith (9).

When in May of the following year he appeared at the bar of the General Assembly he frankly avowed, "I do teach

that the Atonement was for the whole human race without exception and without distinction." He denied, however, that his teaching implied or inferred universal salvation or universal restitution. In the years that followed his deposition his belief in universal atonement remained unshaken, though the crudities and the inconsistencies of his earlier position disappeared, and his teaching became in a real sense epoch-making in the history of theological study.

It was in this same question of the extent of redemption that the Evangelical Union took its rise in 1843. In the United Secession Church the doctrine of the Atonement, in so far as its benefits were regarded as being limited to the elect, was assailed by one of the younger ministers of the denomination, the Rev. <sup>James</sup> ~~John~~ Morison, who on being expelled from the Church, started the Evangelical Union, a body of which it has been said that it evinced the virtues of courage and self-sacrifice and helped to vitalise the religious climate of Scotland. It had its origin, as all great religious movements have had, in a living personal experience. Morison was a man of scholarly attainments; it was said that the Rev. Dr. John Brown, Principal of the Theological Hall of the United Secession Church in Edinburgh, and Professor of Exegetical Theology, had hopes at one time that Morison would succeed him in his chair.

At an early stage in his career, and mainly as the outcome of prayerful study of the Scriptures, Morison came

to the conclusion that God's offer of salvation was universal, without any reservation, and that nothing but unwillingness could hinder even the worst of sinners from responding to it with full assurance of faith. During his trials for ordination at Kilmarnock he was asked what he made of the statement, Jesus Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. He replied that he considered that the term "all" there referred not to all classes merely, but to all individuals in all classes. He added that he believed that Christ died for all so as to bring it within the power of all to be saved, but not so as to secure the salvation of all. In his earliest publication, an eighteen-page tract, entitled The Question, What must I do to be saved ? answered, he said, "Election in the order of nature comes after the purpose of the atonement; and when it is properly understood it is one of the most delightful doctrines of Scripture. It is so because it secures 'a seed' to Jesus. The harmony of doctrines I apprehend to be the following. God foresaw that all men would become hell-deserving sinners; He resolved, in consequence of His ineffable love and pity, to provide an atonement sufficient for the salvation of all; He resolved to offer this atonement to all, so that all should be able and all should be welcome to come and accept it as all their salvation: He foresaw, however, that not one of the whole human family would be willing to be saved in this way, and then He elected. That all might not be lost, that Jesus might see of the



travail of His soul and be satisfied, He resolved to bestow on some such influences of His Spirit as would infallibly dispose them to accept what all others are able and welcome to take"(10).

It will be seen that here Morison, very much as Fraser did, holds a universal Atonement and a universal offer but also a limited destination through the effectual application of the former by the Holy Spirit to the unconditionally elect. As Dr. CG. M'Crie pointed out, the position was unsatisfactory but later on the doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Union, which Morison helped to found in 1843, after his deposition from the United Secession Church, was given logical consistency and completeness by the Rev. John Kirk. "At the time of formation in 1843," M'Crie writes, "the Rev. James Morison, the able and erudite champion of the cause, produced a summary of principles which he and his clerical associates regarded as their creed, although they repudiated the idea that it was to be taken as a standard or as a test and term of communion. In this document there is a distinct advance made by the compilers upon the position which they took up when at the bar of the court which suspended or deposed them. Up to this time they maintained that they did not deviate from 'the main scope' of the Westminster Confession, while they did not consider themselves as bound to every minute aspect and detail to be found in the symbol they had subscribed. And so they accepted the position of the Marrow men and the first Seceders, which they erroneously affirmed is not in the Westminster

Confession, the position that God the Father, out of His love to mankind lost, has made a deed of gift and grant unto all. But in reality they went further than the Bostons and Erskines of the eighteenth century. For the Morisonians held that our Lord in dying sustained no special relation to elect persons, but was the substitute of the whole human race, that His Atonement was made equally and in every sense for all men, and that the Divine purpose of atonement was prior in the order of nature to election; God having appointed it, not to secure the salvation of any, but to render the salvation of all possible. This is certainly not Calvinism, not even qualified Calvinism. And yet it is not the position of thorough Arminianism. For up to the date of the first statement all the four founders of the Evangelical Union believed in a limitation of Christ's Atonement in respect of its application" (11).

Morison's theological position was in all essential points the same as that which M<sup>r</sup> Leod Campbell held at the time of his trial. He believed, as M<sup>r</sup> Leod Campbell did, that one must accept universal atonement and pardon, assurance of faith, and the efficacy of Christ's work in making expiation for all sin except that of unbelief. There is no record of Morison's having ever attributed the origin of his opinions to Campbell, but as Dr. J.H. Leckie has pointed out, it is hardly conceivable that a man who began his theological studies within three years of the close of a famous controversy knew nothing of the

issues involved in it and learned nothing from its contendings.

"Morison," says Dr. Leckie, "repeated almost exactly the assertions of the earlier reformer, and even echoed his phrases. If, indeed, it be true, as was claimed in 1841, that the Morisonian doctrine was inspired by the teaching of Dr. John Brown in his professorial lectures, then we must conclude that Dr. John Brown had himself drawn water from the wells of Campbell, or at least from neighbouring springs. But, however this may be, it remains true that Morison simply uttered within his own communion the doctrine that had been condemned in the Church of Scotland. And his testimony brought upon him the same fate as had befallen the minister of Row" (12). Of Morison's theology in its later developments the same writer says that "he tended to approach more nearly to Arminianism than he had done when he left the Seceders. But he never fully realised the speculative weakness of the position which he occupied in 1841. Campbell .... had tried to defend the same position during his own Trial, but the Assembly debate convinced him of his error, and he proceeded forthwith to that great task of radical reconstruction through which he has made the whole world his debtor. Morison, on the other hand, remained to the last not far from the tenets of his youth" (13).

The deposition of Morison did not end the Atonement controversy in the United Secession Church. Dr. John Brown was suspected of sharing his pupils' views, if not indeed being the fount from which these views had originally come. When

the Synod met to deal with Morison the older man pleaded for milder treatment than the Synod was disposed to accord to the accused, and when in the end sentence of deposition was passed Brown handed in his dissent. His colleague, Professor Balmer, ~~sa~~ <sup>shared</sup> his views. When the Rev. Mr. Walker of Comrie was charged before the same Synod that condemned Morison with giving assent to propositions which asserted the salvation of the elect in consequence of the special relation of the Atonement to them, and at the same time affirmed that the mediation of the Saviour opened a door of mercy to mankind-sinners, Balmer pleaded successfully for the exercise of forbearance, quoting the words of the great American Calvinist, Jonathan Edwards, to the effect that, however Christ in some sense may be said to have died for all, and to redeem all visible Christians, yea, the whole world by His death, yet ~~there~~ must be something particular in the design of His death, with respect to such as He intended should actually be saved thereby.

The following year Balmer edited Edward Polhill's treatise dealing with the extent of the death of Christ in which it was maintained that Christ died in some sort for all men, and by virtue of His death all men, if believers, should equally be saved; nevertheless Christ did not die equally for them all, but after a special manner for the elect, above and beyond all others. In 1843 Brown and Balmer were requested to meet the Synod, and to express their sentiments on the doctrinal matters then agitating the Church. The result of

that conference was that supposed diversities of sentiment in a large measure disappeared. On the two aspects of the Atonement there was entire harmony, all holding that in making the Atonement Christ sustained special covenant relations to the elect, that He had a special love to them and infallibly secured their everlasting salvation; and that His obedience unto death afforded such a satisfaction to the justice of God as that, on the ground of it, in consistency with His character and law the door of mercy is opened to all men, and a full and free salvation is presented for their acceptance. The Synod recommended that ministers and preachers should abstain from the use of such ambiguous phrases as "universal atonement" and "limited atonement."

The Atonement controversy, however, was by no means finished. Dr. Andrew Marshall of Kirkintilloch, who had been one of Morison's bitterest opponents, brought grave charges against the two professors. Balmer died in 1845 but that same year Brown had to appear before the bar of the Synod to answer a charge of heresy. One of the five counts in the indictment was that he taught that Christ did not die for the elect only, or make satisfaction for their sins only, but that He died for all men and made atonement or satisfaction for the sins of all men. To this Brown's answer was :- "The proposition Christ died for all men has been employed in three senses. In the sense that He died with the intention and to the effect of securing salvation, I hold that He died for



the elect only; in the sense that He died to procure easier terms of salvation and grace, to enable men to comply with these terms, I hold that He died for no man; in the sense that He died to remove legal obstacles in the way of human salvation and open a door of mercy, I hold that He died for all men."

On this count Brown was unanimously acquitted, and in its finding the Synod affirmed that he expressly rejected the Arminian doctrine of universal redemption, and that he held the doctrine of the Reformers, of the Subordinate Standards, and of previous decisions of the Secession Church, according to which the death of Christ, viewed in connection with covenant engagements, secures the salvation of the elect only, while a foundation has been laid in His death for a full, sincere, and consistent offer of the Gospel to all mankind. Brown was in fact cleared on all five counts, and the Synod passed a general and unanimous resolution in which it was stated that there never existed any ground even for suspicion that he held any opinion on the points under review inconsistent with the Word of God or the Subordinate Standards of the Secession Church.

Dr. Leckie points out that the **result** of the Atonement controversy in the Secession Church was good, "for it issued in this," he says, "that the Seceders henceforth occupied a position as to the Atonement which was in advance of that held by other Presbyterian Churches. That position was in effect that the sacrifice of Christ secured a free offer of forgiveness to every man. The Redeemer's work was thus affirmed to have

a 'general' as well as a 'particular' aspect, though no attempt was made to explain this affirmation or to reconcile it with Confessional Doctrine. The conclusion thus reached marked a stage in the progress of Scottish theology; it was, indeed, an implicit departure from the Westminster Standards; but it also bequeathed a difficult problem to the future age. It was plainly impossible for thoughtful minds to rest content with the mere assurance that Christ had achieved something for the salvation of all mankind, something that was incapable of being stated. Sooner or later an attempt must be made to discover what was the actual nature and extent of the blessing secured for the human race by the Saviour of the world" (14).

How much of the credit of all this is to be ascribed to Fraser and his teaching it is very difficult to say. But at least it may be claimed that he was one of the first in Scotland to deal with these matters in a really big way. That he was much in advance of his time is true. It is also true that he did not attempt to follow out his theories to their logical conclusion, and that he permitted himself to wander out into unprofitable side-alleys. But when all is said nothing can rob him of his place as one of the pioneers in the breakaway from harsh and over-rigid theories of the extent of the Atonement of our Lord.

VI  
E P I L O G U E

"The name of Fraser of Brea is one well known, and very precious to many: a man he was of profound piety, full of love and devotion to his Master, for whom in the days of suffering he had borne an unflinching testimony. None is mentioned with greater respect by his contemporaries among the good men of his time."

- Walker's Theology and Theologians  
of Scotland, p. 80.

## C H A P T E R   XXIV

### THE COVENANTER

Hitherto we have been concerned mainly with Fraser of Brea as a theologian, and with his influence as such upon religious thought in Scotland. But it is as well to remind ourselves that it was not as a theologian but as a Covenanter that he was best known in his own time, and if one may venture to make a prophecy it is as a Covenanter, in the narrower sense of the term, that he will continue to hold a place in the annals of the Scottish Church. His theology, interesting though it is, has never been regarded as the most important thing about him.

As we have seen from his Memoirs he came of a Covenanting family. His father, the redoubtable Sir James Fraser of Brae, was one of the leaders of the movement in the North, and did much to rally his clan round the banner of Scottish Presbyterianism, and the son followed in the father's footsteps not so much because it was the filial thing to do but from deep conviction. For some time after the Restoration of 1660 he continued to attend the ministrations of those who conformed to Prelacy, and there were many such in the North (James Fraser's namesake, the minister of Wardlaw, and author

of the invaluable Wardlaw Manuscript, was only one of many), but after a while he became conscious that these ministrations were doing him no good; rather were they lowering the tone of his spiritual life. He was not the only one in the Scotland of that period who discovered that if he was to remain spiritually alive he would have to go out into the wilderness.

And out into the wilderness he went some time about the year 1666. He cast in his lot with the persecuted party, and from then on remained one of their leaders, sharing their sufferings, and in the end having his part with them in their victory. It is unnecessary here to recapitulate the events of his life as a member of the persecuted party.

Fraser was undoubtedly one of the leaders of the movement, but at the same time it has frankly to be admitted that he neither aspired to nor was accorded a place anywhere in the first rank of the Covenanters however well equipped he was both intellectually and spiritually for such pre-eminence. It was not that his contemporaries failed to recognise his merits; still less was it that they doubted his integrity as a Covenanter. The reason seems to have been that they realised that in some subtle way he was not altogether one of them; on many points he and they failed to see eye to eye, and it sometimes happened that they simply failed to speak the same language.

One reason for this was, of course, the fact that his theology, as we have seen, was by no means orthodox for the



times in which he lived. He launched out on a line of his own which gained him few if any followers in his own time, and not a great many later on. And his age was one in which to be theologically suspect was to forfeit all hope of ever attaining to a position of unquestioned leadership. To be guilty of heresy, even to give the least indication that one was not absolutely sound, was in that time to be guilty of a crime of the first magnitude.

"In common with other seventeenth-century Protestants," says Dr. Hector Macpherson, "The Covenanters were more or less in bondage to the orthodox theology. Protestantism had carried over from the Roman Church the belief that heresy was a moral offence. And in addition .... local circumstances conspired to render the Covenanters specially suspicious of liberal views in theology. On this point there was complete unanimity. Heterodoxy, in any shape or form, was thought to be of the devil. One of the sanest, most tolerant, and most consistently Christian of the Covenanting leaders could say in dealing with the Arminian controversy: 'Election is mutable, as damnable heretics say, but, thanks be to God, we have not so learned Christ.' A clear-thinking layman could speak of Anabaptism as, equally with Prelacy, a device of Satan. Brown expressed his regret that no physical restraint was put upon Papists; and in the later stages of the persecution the Society people kept a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer for certain causes, among which were specified not only the

introduction and toleration of Popery, but the 'free liberty granted to Quakerism.' Cameron denounced Socinianism, Arminianism, and Quakerism as 'derogatory to the sufferings of Christ and His declarative glory in the world.' Renwick spoke of the Arminian attitude as a 'great iniquity.' Shields went still farther. 'Suppose,' he said, 'a Papist, Quaker, Socinian, or Arminian should lay down his life for that which is mere truth and duty, yet they could not be accounted martyrs for Christ, because they are heretical as to the most part of the fundamental truth of the Gospel of Christ' (1).

None of the Covenanters said harder things about Papists, Arminians, Quakers, and other 'heretocal' sects than Fraser himself, yet the fact remains that he was regarded as tainted with heresy, in particular with a leaning to Arminianism, and that suspicion, whether well or ill founded, was sufficient to prevent him from becoming one of the real leaders of the Covenanters.

Again, he was known to be at best only lukewarm in his adherence to some of the fundamental tenets of seventeenth-century Scottish Presbyterianism. For example he did not share the widely held belief in the Scotland of his time in the exclusive divine right of Presbytery. Before he was licensed, as has already been pointed out, there were strong suspicions that he was congregational in his views of church government, or at least that he was lax in his principles as to presbyterial government. It was also rumoured that it

was his intention to form a sect of his own. When taxed with these suspicions he candidly confessed that as to the government of the church, there were so many godly men among the Independents, that he could not but love them and acknowledge them a true church of Christ, and that the difference betwixt them and Presbyterians being so small, it was indifferent to him to live in fellowship either with the one or the other. He maintained, however, that he abhorred the thought of making factions. In short, as James Anderson points out, "Fraser's sentiments on church government were more loose than those held by the nonconforming Presbyterian ministers in general, who strictly held the exclusive divine right of Presbytery" (2). The one form of church government for which he had no use whatsoever was prelacy. No one can read his Lawfulness and Duty of Separation without realising that.

This tolerance of his was seen in other things as well as in his views of church government. Judged by modern standards many of the things he said and wrote about those from whom he differed, the conformists, for example, are harsh enough in all conscience; yet compared with what was common in religious controversy in his day they were mild and innocuous. The writer of the Preface to the Reader in the 1722 Faith Treatise, it will be remembered, coupled Fraser's name with those of "that shining light, Mr. James Webster," and "the godly and learned Mr. Thomas Halyburton," saying of

all three that they "were loath so much as to insinuate a reflexion on any, if there were not too apparent ground" (3). Fraser himself confesses that he had no great liking for polemics. We find him writing in the Memoirs, "Though I did sometimes (the Lord putting it in my mind and mouth) preach against the ungodly ministers the curates, the particular duties of the times, yet were the substantial truths of religion the more ordinary subject of my discourses, and it was 'Christ and Him crucified' that I was mostly called to preach" (4).

Tolerance was not one of the outstanding characteristics of the men with whom Fraser was associated, and the very fact that he had it and they had not tended to create a barrier between them, and even to exclude him from their inner counsels. What John M'Millan of Balmaghie's biographer says of that doughty warrior might with equal truth be said of Fraser. Referring to M'Millan's tolerance Dr. H.M.B. Reid writes:- "This may seem a strong term to give to one, who was at the head of a body which continued to denounce witchcraft and quakerism in the same breath, and to which George Whitefield was simply a blind prelatist. But M'Millan strove from the first to broaden the view of his co-religionists. He stood out for a certain clerical communion and fellowship .... He took no part in the military operations of the Societies. His aim seems really to have been to live and let live, leaving time to vindicate his testimony for the

'good old ways.' Like Hepburn, he seems to have mellowed into a serene endurance and solemn expectation. He felt that, for himself, he had done right; but he could not declare that everyone else had done wrong" (5). Something will be said later in this chapter of Fraser's pacifism which was, so to speak, an extension of his tolerance.

In seeking to understand the position Fraser held among the Covenanters one has also to remember that he was, in the best sense of the term, 'other-worldly.' Some of the confessions which he makes in the Memoirs are very revealing to those who wish to get to know the real man, and more than once in the course of these frank personal disclosures the reader finds him writing of his distaste for temporal and civil concerns. For example, when enumerating twenty-seven things which by the blessing of God, had done him good, he says, in his final paragraph :- "I have found much good by being abstracted from meddling in temporal or civil business. That I had not great meddling in affairs in the beginning of my Christian course, partly that others did not employ me, but took all to their own hand; partly that I was indifferent, and had no heart while I had so great things ado in reference to my soul. And although my affairs called for diligence, yet do I not now repent of it; for I thereby got my heart wholly taken up with my soul's condition, and had no divertisement" (6). There, one ventures to think, the enquirer will find another reason why he was not more of a leader.



It gave Fraser no pleasure to discover that he was in opposition to any man, even in matters of opinion. For example, in his Second Faith Treatise, where he states his belief that sinners have a certain right or title to the promises of the Gospel, apart from any act of faith on their part, he says that he realises that in so holding he differs from many godly men, and this, he confesses, is a grief to him. "For my part," he writes, "I do not willingly state myself as a party opponent to any, much less to a stream of godly men, from whom to differ, or to walk in a singular road is a terror to me, and with whom I would not only think but speak the same things .... Though I express myself variously from others, and perhaps singularly, yet I trust not contrary, or contradictory, and that the bottom of both our meanings may be the same; or if any difference be that at least it shall be found not fundamental or circumstantial" (7).

At the same time he was not afraid to differ from others, and in many matters it has to be acknowledged that he held views which, to say the least, were curious, and certainly not those currently held in the circles in which he moved. One instance of this is his views on marriage, and in particular his aversion to the conducting by a minister of the marriage ceremony. The following passage is taken from his Memoirs. Referring to his own very happy first marriage he says, "Marriage is one of the most important steps of a man's life: O then, with what fear, and trembling, and godly dependence,

should we go about such a matter !" (8). But he goes on to say that he does not approve of the marriage ceremony being performed on the Lord's Day, and he does not think it right that it should be performed by a minister save in exceptionally circumstances. "I think it a greater sin," he says, "to marry on the Lord's Day than to yoke a plough, inasmuch as the work and concern is greater; and I judge it to be one of the provoking profanations of the Lord's Day, the sinful continuance of this; and I seldom ever see these marriages blessed that were celebrated on that day. They must be strangely mortified creatures that do not 'find their own pleasures that day.' I never durst do or advise to it. I am hardly free for ministers to marry persons; to give them exhortations, and to seek a blessing upon them I think very commendable; but to minister in the action, ceremony and rite, which is the badge of that relation, I think it is no more competent to him, than to give a sasine in land. Yet, as times go now, I think it not altogether unlawful to marry by a minister; but it were to be wished this and other things were reformed, which, as they are relics of Popery, so do they tend to beget in us an opinion of marriage being a sacrament, seeing ministers only administer it; and commonly people think, that if ministers <sup>d</sup>o not marry them, that they are not married at all. And this likewise begets the marrying on the Lord's Day, seeing they take it for some spiritual action, performable only by ministers" (9).

But possibly it was Fraser's pacifism, his rooted objection to the use of force, which more than anything else separated him from a great many of the leading men in the Covenanting movement. His unwillingness to defend, where necessary by force of arms, the things which both he and his brethren held dear was not understood by his friends; still less by his enemies who could make little of a man who refused to meet them with their own weapons. His calm bearing and his deadly logic - the only weapons he cared to wield, and which on more than one occasion he did wield with telling effect - did more to exasperate his persecutors than any recourse to pistol and sword would have done. Though a strenuous upholder and fearless defender of the principles of the Covenants, he confined his advocacy to moral suasion, and strongly disapproved of carrying the sword into the conflict. This attitude of his has already been referred to in the course of the present thesis, but it will not be without profit to dwell a little further upon it now for one cannot understand the man apart from it.

On this question of active or passive resistance there was sharp divergence of opinion among the Covenanters. J. King Hewison points out that after their victory at Drumclog and on the eve of Bothwell Bridge the Covenanting host "fluctuated between five and eight thousand men. It was composed of four distinct classes, each a menace to the other. The victors under Hamilton, with the ministers, Cargill, Douglas, Kemp,

were the uncompromising opponents of the existing politico-ecclesiastical system, and avowing the tenets of Richard Cameron, were ready to adventure on action damaging to Malignant and Indulged alike. The moderate Presbyterians, King and others, soon to be largely reinforced by Welsh and the men of Carrick, Gordon, and the Galloway outlaws, Ure of Shargarton and the Stirlingshire stalwarts, and others, came into camp willing to assist in restoring freedom, spiritual and civil; and, while antagonistic to the Indulgence, tolerated all the Indulged who safeguarded Presbyterian principles. There was a more peaceable section still, little represented however, who held with Blackadder and Fraser of Brae that 'The Lord called for a testimony by suffering rather than outward deliverance.' There was a fourth, the worst class, the indifferent and ungodly associates, who joined expecting loot and a chance to fight where there was no danger" (10).

Dr. Hector Macpherson has pointed out that "there were among the non-indulged Covenanters two distinct strains of thought. There was the moderate group, including such men as Welch, Blackadder, Fraser of Brea; there was the Cameronian party, which actually drew its inspiration from the exiles, Brown and M'Ward, and was afterwards led by Cargill, Cameron, and Renwick. The Moderates were themselves divided into two sections - the more militant party led by Welch and the pacifist non-resisters, such as

Blackadder and Fraser. At first the Moderates were in the majority. While holding in reserve such theories as the derivation of kingly power and the right of the people to dethrone the king, they walked warily and demanded only modest reforms. They were divided in their attitude to resistance. Blackadder, who held what to-day would be called a pacifist position, objected to the practice of carrying arms to conventicles. 'Trust rather in Jehovah and the shield of Omnipotence' was his advice on one occasion. And while he did not seek to dissuade whose whose consciences were clear, he himself refused to take part in either of the risings. Fraser went further; he preached against armed rebellion. On the other hand, Welch was 'out' at Pentland and again at Bothwell, and Semple, another prominent field-preacher, took part in the first-named rising. Welch, however, was present in the camp at Bothwell, as a moderating influence, and in the Hamilton Declaration, for which he was largely responsible, the appeal to arms was spoken of as a last remedy. The Moderates were therefore averse from rebellion. My own judgment is that they were right. The two risings were tactical errors, and the Bothwell rising was a blunder of the first magnitude. The policy of passive resistance had all but paralysed the Government in the seventies; the policy of active resistance not only divided the Covenanters but gave the Government the excuse for intensifying the persecution with redoubled fury. Burnet records that Lauderdale said



to him, 'Would to God they would rebel,' so 'that he might bring oger an army of Irish papists to cut all their throats'; and rebel they did. After the Bothwell rising the Moderate party was virtually eliminated. Its last representative, Blackadder, was sent to the Bass in 1681. Henceforth the resistance was led by the Cameronians, the left-wing party"(11).

Over and over again in his Memoirs Fraser makes quite clear what his attitude to the use of force had always been. In Chapter Ten, writing of the persecutions in the seventies, he says, "I returned South, but a violent persecution had broken out, and then there <sup>began</sup> ~~was~~ to be fining, imprisoning, taking, and summoning of persons, disturbing of conventicles with soldiers. But yet the Gospel prevailed more and more, and we were like the 'Israelites in Egypt, the more we were afflicted, the more we grew and multiplied.' Some hot-heads were for taking the sword, and redeeming of themselves from the hands of oppressors; at least I had ground to fear it: but I opposed rising in arms all I could, and preached against it, and exhorted them to patience and courageous using of the sword of the Spirit; and I did not see they had any call to the sword, that their 'strength was to sit still.' And if they did stir and take the sword, they would therewith perish; but if they patiently suffered and endured, God would Himself either incline to pity, or some other way support and deliver them. I had influence with the people, being popular; and whilst I was at liberty, I did what I could to keep the

people peaceable. The truth is, there were great provocations given, so that we conclude it was the design of some rulers to stir us up that we might fall. Ministers still preached and laboured amongst the people, conventicles increased, many were brought in; the Work of God in the midst of persecution did always prosper, until we destroyed ourselves, first by needless divisions and difference in opinion happening by reason of the Indulgence, and thereafter by rash and unwarrantable taking up of arms most unseasonably in the year 1679; when the dissenting party, a good number of them meeting at a conventicle to worship God, being assaulted by armed men, and defending of themselves did kill about thirty men of their enemies. With this success both engaged and heartened, great numbers gathered together, but not in the Lord's strength; and there, by their unseasonable divisions, and folly of some, they were made a prey to their enemies, as is fully known" (12).

In the section of the Memoirs in which he deals with his public sufferings in general he says: "The cause and occasions of my sufferings was, dissenting from, and nonconformity to, the government of prelacy in the Church; for not coming to church to hear such ministers and officers as did officiate by an unlawful (to me) authority; for adhering to the persecuted, deserted party, who stood upon their former ground, cleaving to their former principles; and for taking upon me to preach without the bishop's authority. This, in short time, exposed me to the last of the laws against dissenters, and malice of

the bishops, whose principles, ways, courses, and office, I was convinced were not of God, and by instinct was averse to. For as to any other thing, whether immorality or sedition, I could not be charged therewith, being as to man unblameable, of sufficiently loyal principles, and kept from having hand in our concurrence with any public insurrection that was; so that there was nothing that could be laid to my charge but as concerning my God and conscience" (13).

"Under public sufferings," he says later on, "we are mostly called to submission and patience, both in reference to God and men: 'In patience possess your souls'; and to Christian cheerfulness. Oh, what a comely thing it is to see a meek sufferer, like the Master, 'not opening His mouth,' but 'dumb as a sheep is before the shearer !' And how ordinarily do men fall in this great sin of impatience ? And cheerfulness under the cross of Christ is no less beautiful; and, therefore, how frequent such precepts and examples, to 'glory, rejoice in tribulation ?' for this gives a good report of Christ, His cause and cross to others" (14). Miscarriages of superiors, he holds, should not "dissolve the civil or natural bonds of relation to them. We are to do, and be submissive to, the commands of superiors, though we be not to imitate their practice" (15).

Late in 1681, it will be remembered, he was cited to appear before the Privy Council being charged with preaching in the fields and without authority, and with venting of

principles that were pernicious, seditious, and rebellious, and tending to alienate the minds of his Majesty's subjects from his government. In his defence, which lasted "a large half-hour," he acknowledged 'magistracy an ordinance of God, and the present king's authority, whose subject and servant I ~~am~~ was, and obliged to submit to, reverence and esteem, whom, for anything relating to my person and estate, I never was resolved to resist" (16). He stated further "that as to the government of the Church, it was true that I did not close with that form of government by archbishops and bishops now established in the kingdom, and therefore could never concur with or submit to the same any manner of way; but whatever my dissatisfaction therewith was, or opposition thereto, I never opposed it but with spiritual weapons. And as for my practice, I can say, I have endeavoured to keep a good conscience, both before God and men, to live unblameable and peaceably, giving 'to God what was God's,' and to Caesar what was Caesar's;' was never in any insurrection, rebellion, or conspiracy against his Majesty's person or government, nor never stirred up others thereto, but rather to live peaceably, and by repentance, reformation, testimony for God, quietness and confidence, and other spiritual means, to expect deliverance; not by irritating of the rulers, to make their bonds heavier, by taking the sword, and resisting by force; and this both publicly in sermons and privately in discourses. These, therefore, being our principles, which

we are not ashamed of, but ready to defend, it is a wonder to me how I or any sober person of our age come to be challenged for seditious principles and practices, or charged with them" (17).

When in July 1683 he was arrested in London, following upon the discovery of the Rye-House Plot, he stated in answer to the question which was put to him in presence of the king and the Duke of York, 'whether he knew or heard of a plot against his Majesty at any time' : "That I knew nothing of a plot against his Majesty's person or government, nor heard anything but what was discovered since that plot did break out, nor knew nor heard anything I could make them the wiser by; that I was no public person, nor frequenter of cabals or coffee-houses; that I know not any one person, either accusers or accused, in that plot; that I always lived peaceably, and was never accessory to any plot or insurrection that ever was; that in my judgment (which I declared) I was against all violent attempts against his Majesty or government; and that it was not likely any who had such designs, knowing my principles, would communicate ought to me of it; yea, that I always shunned discourses of that nature" (18).

Enough has been said, I think, to show that Fraser differed in many respects from the other leaders of the Covenanting movement; but his very divergences from them serve to enhance rather than to diminish or detract from his reputation. They were all men of Christ, men who were ready to suffer



persecution, torture, and death for the Crown Rights of the Redeemer; but in moments of crisis many of them displayed a spirit that accorded ill with the cause in which they fought. There were others, of course, who had not so learned Christ, men who when they were reviled, reviled not again, when they suffered, threatened not, but committed themselves to Him that judgeth righteously; and among the latter Fraser of Brea will always hold an honoured place.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE MAN

It has been said that "it is easier to record the facts of a man's life than to appreciate the traits of his character" (1). That is as true of Fraser of Brea as of others. In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to record the outstanding facts of his life as well as to trace the influence of his theology upon the life and thought of the Scottish Church; it now remains to look at some of the characteristics of Fraser the man, in so far as this has not already been done in the last chapter, where we dealt with his traits as a Covenanter.

It cannot honestly be maintained that as far as his published works are concerned Fraser has any particular message for our time. What John Carstares said of his peculiar theory of universal redemption, in the letter in which he expressed his regret that that theory had ever been made public, applies to most of Fraser's works :- "Any good things in it might have been got elsewhere, to no worse, if not altogether to as good purpose; and the ill and unsound, or raw and undigested things in it, would thus happily never have

been heard tell of." But while his works may have no particular message for us his life certainly has. Murdoch Macdonald of Nairn speaks of him as "one of the most striking characters of the time" (2), and Robert King refers to him as "a man of apostolic fervour, tempered by a rare and guileless prudence" (3). The latter also speaks of him as, from various circumstances in his social position and history, standing at the head of the persecuted ministers of the North (4).

Fraser's name is one which will continue to be held in reverence in the Scottish Church; but the reason is not so much his work as a theologian, though it would be wrong either to despise or to depreciate that, as his devout Christian character, and his steadfastness in the face of persecution. His example was one worth following in his own day, and it is one worth following still. He lived in an age when men of upright character were sorely needed in Scotland, and the day has not yet dawned, in Scotland or anywhere else, when such men can be dispensed with. One might well apply to him the words which Sir James Barrie used of Dr. Alexander Whyte in a letter to Robertson Nicoll: "To know him was to know what the Covenanters were like in their most splendid hours."

His outstanding characteristic, to judge both from his own writings and the opinion held of him by his contemporaries, was his piety. He was a man who loved God with a deep and warm-hearted loyalty which no words can adequately express.

Dr. James Walker pays a well-deserved tribute to him when he says that "the name of Fraser of Brea is one well known, and very precious to many: a man he was of profound piety, full of love and devotion to his Master, for whom in the days of suffering he had borne an unflinching testimony. None is mentioned with greater respect by his contemporaries among the good men of his time .... He tells us how he was assailed with historic doubts, - such as might have been learned in the schools of Strauss or Baur. But these very unfoldings of his inner life which he has given us, evidently indicate that if he was a man both of gifts and grace, he was also a man of a peculiar type" (5). Fraser was undoubtedly a man of peculiar type, as Walker suggests, but his piety has never been called in question. Piety indeed is the first thought that springs to the mind when his name is mentioned.

I have had occasion to refer more than once to Dr. Whyte's opinion of Fraser. In his Introductory Note to the 1889 edition of the Memoirs he speaks of him as being above all a religious man. "Fraser," he writes, "was one of the ablest men in a time of able men, and his high and abiding value stands in this, that he turned his great intellectual gifts so powerfully to the interests of experimental religion. Fraser is one of my prime favourites; he stands beside Augustine, Bunyan, Baxter, Edwards, Boston, Shepard, and Halyburton, at my elbow" (6). Elsewhere he says of him: "James Fraser will live .... as long as a scholarly religion,

and an evangelical religion, and a spiritual religion, and a profoundly experimental religion lives in his native land."

Hutchison, the historian of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, says of Fraser that "he was a man of deep personal piety, and an earnest preacher. Thomas Boston, who, while a tutor in the neighbourhood, came into contact with him, refers to him in his Memoirs in terms of high appreciation. He possessed considerable mental ability, and had passed through a peculiar spiritual experience, of which he has given us an account in a work which has been republished in our own day" (7). Scott, in the Fasti, writes: "Fraser's reputation rests on his noble and saintly character, his devotion to the Presbyterian principles, his sacrifices for the same, and his Memoirs" (8). Dr. Elder Cumming confesses that while "Fraser has had more or less a Scottish reputation only; and even in the North is not very generally known .... there has, however, always been what we may call a tradition that for depth, reality, and grip, Fraser stands in the very forefront of the worthies and saints of the Christian past" (9). And J.C. Johnston sums Fraser up by saying that he was "one of the excellent of the earth .... He was a man of masterly intellect, and mighty in the Scriptures. Preaching Christ was his grand endeavour. Like Peden, he had a passion for souls" (10). Finally, Dr. C.G. M'Crie has this to say of him: "His well-known, often republished Memoirs reveal a man much given to introspection, troubled now and again with historic doubts



and spiritual misgivings, but withal a man of rare sanctity and of intense attachment to the Person and Kingdom of Christ" (11).

All of these, it will be noted, are at one in paying tribute to Fraser's piety. There is a similar unanimity in acknowledging his intellectual ability. No one can read his books without being impressed by the richness of his mind, and his power of grappling with the most abstruse problems. For his period he was widely read. Even the most cursory glance at any one of his published works will reveal something of the quality and variety of his reading. He was familiar with all the great writers of the Reformation and post-Reformation periods; the bare list of the names he mentions and the works from which he quotes surprises one by its length. But more impressive than the width and variety of his reading is the fact that he himself wrote nothing which he had not first carefully thought out in all its aspects. All his works are the fruit of mature and deep study.

Then there is his introspection. All who have studied Fraser have been arrested, and in some cases repelled, by his habit of soul-searching. One has frankly to admit that he was too introspective and 'intricate' to make any wide popular appeal in his own day, much less in ours. Dr. Whyte's biographer points out that "it was not always possible for those of Dr. Whyte's classes who followed him into the byways of Puritan theology to agree with his judgment of such

introspective and 'intricate' authors as Fraser of Brea. In this region there often remained a definite difference of outlook between teacher and students which only made his intellectual and spiritual influence not infrequently, however, stand out in bolder relief" (12). And yet while Fraser's introspective habits may not attract us to him they serve, one ventures to think, to emphasise the depth and richness of his spiritual life. His religion was a thing of great heights and great depths; where other men were content with things on or near the surface he was never happy unless he was in contact with the deep things of God. "We do not grow these deep, soul-conversing men nowadays," said Charles Spurgeon; "the moderns would not know them, but would ridicule them as morbid, visionary, unpractical and the like. The true-born heir of heaven, in whom there is spiritual life, is aware of secret sorrows and inward pinings which the bastard professor never feels; and, on the other hand, he is cognisant of secret joys and raptures which the mere pretender cannot imagine. We do not wish any reader to imitate James Fraser any more than we would desire to see him confined in the Bass Rock; but we greatly pity any professed Christian who will not be the better for marking the way of inward tribulation in which the Lord led His faithful servant" (13).

There is also a fairly general consensus of agreement with regard to the fact that his divergences from the orthodox theology and religious thinking of the day were 'peculiar.'

Almost all who have written about him or his theories are at one in holding that he solved his historic doubts and questionings in a manner which was not only scripturally unsound, but also unhelpful to men and women seeking a sure foundation for faith. He imagined that he had discovered a way out of the difficulties which confronted those who were anxious to find a middle way between a hard and fast doctrine of predestination on the one hand, and on the other ~~of~~ unconditioned free-will; but his theory, ingenious though it was in many respects, failed to satisfy those whom it was meant to guide and comfort. His idea of 'Gospel-wrath,' for example, was in itself more likely to lead to further and greater doubts in the minds of anxious seekers after truth than to solve the problems with which they were already faced. Undoubtedly his universalism had a message of comfort for many, but it was a theory so conditioned, so hedged about by 'peculiar' ideas, that any comfort it brought was more than offset by its crudities, and still more by its obvious lack of sure warrant in the Gospel of the grace and love of God.

But the fact that Fraser was a man of peculiar type, and often singular in his views, does not cancel out his real greatness. Still less should it lead any to seek to deprive him of that respect and veneration which his piety, his consecrated learning, and his sufferings for the cause of Christ won for him in the minds of the men and women of his own day, and also of all who in later generations have been

willing to listen to the message of his life rather than to the sometimes 'bizarre' theories to be found in his writings.

I close this sketch with two tributes to Fraser, one recent, the other dating from last century. "His work," says Dr. Adam Philip, "has value as the thinking of a man who lived through the hottest time in Scotland's history, and suffered for the faith on the Bass, at Blackness, and in Newgate .... (he) tells us how, thanks partly to the evangelical preaching which he heard, and which evangelised his mind, he came to live and work far more evangelically than he was wont to do. The reader of his Autobiography is conscious of this. Amid the close and striking analysis of the intricacies of his heart, you cannot always hear the full-throated note of freedom. Indeed, for a time he seemed to himself to want a sufficient ground for the gospel offer .... Without perhaps the clarion note of freedom, Fraser thrust into the life of the seventeenth century thinking which challenged the untruthful ways of the Church and Government, and which steadied and fed, not merely his own life, but that of the pioneers of liberty. No man is mentioned by his contemporaries with greater respect" (14).

"Something is no doubt to be set down to the original character of the man," said Dr. Elder Cumming, "which asserts itself throughout all his Christian experience. He was an unusually strong, acute, passionate north-country Scotsman, of an indomitable will, making many mistakes, and bitterly

reproaching himself for each of them. He had the failing which many of his countrymen have of being painfully self-conscious, and of applying to the analysis of his own feelings a keen metaphysical scrutiny. And this 'personal equation' remaining in him after his conversion, needs always to be taken into account.

"But it seems also true, that from the beginning, from the very night of his conversion, he was beset with doubts, to which he gave way. It is not, indeed, too much to say that for a time he harboured, perhaps even encouraged them, as tokens of humility; not at the time seeing how destructive they must prove to many of the graces of the Christian life. Such a power did they exert over him, that the career of Fraser of Brea is a melancholy instance of how not a few children of God have deemed themselves under His ban, and have spent their days in a cloud which seldom was lifted up.

"But if ever we are tempted to speak too disparagingly of his experience, and to warn others against it, we are forced to remember that he lived at a depth which most Christians have never reached. There beat in his veins a throb of Christian life which most men have never approached. The intensity of all his emotions must not be forgotten. In a word, the perfervidum of the national character was conspicuous all through. It is a life to be read often in wonder, sometimes in awe, but not to be imitated.



"And yet this is precisley what has been done. I have often thought that no character has impressed itself so much on the Highland section of the Scottish nation in the distinctive peculiarities of their Christian teaching and experience as James Fraser of Brea. The same strength and intensity; the same continual self-questioning; the same array of doubts; the same idea that doubting self is the truest attitude, even where it means discouragement and groaning; the same endless considerations on both sides of the case about our inward condition, are found to this day among the Christian people of the Highlands, as are seen in Fraser's Memoir. And he who dares to question them about these things, or to hint that they are not what they should be, will soon find that these people may doubt and be dark, but that they have a power of logic and a fierce fire both of thought and word which Fraser never surpassed. A race of catechists called locally 'the men', who seem to have been moulded on Fraser (though without his learning), rather scorning education, but mighty in the Scriptures, have long led the people in many districts, quite beyond the power of their ministers; and these are the true descendants of the theology and experience of the remarkable man who has been the subject of this chapter" (15).

## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

The Bibliography is in three parts. In Section I there is what is believed to be a complete list of all Fraser's works now extant, whether published or in manuscript form, together with a note of the copies of these in the principal Scottish Libraries and in the British Museum Library.

Section II. contains a selected list of the original documents and contemporary records, including pamphlets, which have been found to be of most use for the purposes of the thesis.

In Section III. will be found a list of the works of more recent date which have been consulted. This list does not claim to be exhaustive; in particular, it has not been thought necessary to detail all the standard works of reference which have been used. Where necessary the particular edition of any work consulted, or from which quotations have been made, has been indicated.

### I. FRASER'S WORKS

#### PRELACY AN IDOL, AND PRELATES IDOLATERS.

1st edn. ? Edin. 1713. Copies are in the National Library of Scotland, and in the British Museum Library.  
2nd edn. Glas. 1742. Copies in the National Library of Scotland, the British Museum Library, New College Library, Edinburgh, the Church of Scotland General Assembly Library, and the Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

#### MEDITATIONS ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS IN DIVINITY. Edin. 1721.

Copies in New College Library, the Church of Scotland General Assembly Library, and Glasgow University Library.

#### A TREATISE CONCERNING JUSTIFYING OR SAVING FAITH. Edin. 1722.

Copies in New College Library, Edinburgh University Library, and Glasgow University Library. The writer of the thesis also has a copy.

## SOME CHOICE SELECT MEDITATIONS. EDIN. 1726.

Copies in the National Library of Scotland, the British Museum Library, and New College Library.

## MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE OF THE REV. JAMES FRASER OF BREA.

1st. edn. Edin. 1738. Copies in the National Library of Scotland, the British Museum Library, New College Library, Edinburgh University Library, and Trinity College Library, Glasgow. An almost perfect copy is in the possession of the writer of the thesis. In the copy in the National Library, also a perfect copy, an autograph letter of Fraser's is inserted.

2nd edn. Aber. 1776. Copies in the National Library of Scotland, and in Aberdeen University Library.

3rd edn. (erroneously called "2nd" edn.). Glas. 1798. Copies in the British Museum Library, Glasgow University Library, and the Mitchell Library. The writer of the thesis has two copies.

4th edn. Aber. 1843. Copies in Aberdeen University Library, and in Christ's College Library, Aberdeen.

5th edn. Edin. 1847. (In the Wodrow Society's Select Biographies, vol. ii, ed. W.K. Tweedie). Many copies available.

6th edn. Aber. 1860. A copy is in Edinburgh University Library.

7th edn. Inverness 1889. With Introductory Note by Dr. Alexander Whyte, and Short Sketch of Fraser by Dr. Gustavus Aird, of Creich. Many copies available.

(Note:- Many of these "editions" are more properly to be regarded as reprints).

## THE LAWFULNESS AND DUTY OF SEPARATION FROM CORRUPT MINISTERS AND CHURCHES EXPLAINED AND VINDICATED. Edin. 1744.

Copies in the National Library of Scotland, New College Library, the Church of Scotland General Assembly Library, Glasgow University Library, Trinity College Library, Aberdeen University Library, and St. Andrews University Library.

## A TREATISE ON JUSTIFYING FAITH. Edin. 1749.

Copies in the National Library of Scotland, New College Library, the Church of Scotland General Assembly Library, Edinburgh University Library, Trinity College Library, the Mitchell Library, and St. Andrews University Library. The writer of the thesis also has a copy.

## MEDITATION ON I TIMOTHY i.15. ? Edin. 1753.

A reprint of one of the items in SOME CHOICE SELECT MEDITATIONS.

## CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.

Greenock 1830. A reprint, with comments, of extracts from the 1749 TREATISE ON JUSTIFYING FAITH. There is a copy in the Glasgow University Library.

## GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY TO ALL PEOPLE. Lond. 1873.

This work contains "reprints from some old and scarce tracts, and, in part, from an old and scarce work by Mr. James Fraser of Brae .... written while he was a prisoner in the Bass for the Testimony of Jesus." There is a copy in the British Museum Library.

CREIDIMH ANN AN DIA, na, Mar a Bha Mi Air Mo Tharruinn a Dh-Ionnsuidh Dhe, Agus Ar Mo Thoirt Gu Dunadh Ris Tre Chreidimh. Caibideal O Eachdraith Beatha an Urr. Seumas Friseal, Braighe, Ann A.D. 1659. Eader-Theangeichte le Cathul Carr. ("Faith in God, or, How I was drawn to God, and led to close with Him through faith. A chapter from the Life of the Rev. James Fraser, Brea, in A.D. 1659. Translated into Gaelic by Cathul Carr). Inverness 1889.

A copy of this work is in the National Library of Scotland.

The following works by Fraser are in existence in manuscript form, though not all are in his handwriting :-

## ANE ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF PHILOCRIS.

This is an original manuscript of Fraser's Memoirs, and deals more with the outward facts of his life than the published work. It is said by David Laing to be in the author's handwriting, and is included in the Laing Mss. (iii. 160) in the Library of Edinburgh University. It was largely drawn upon by Wodrow for his HISTORY OF THE SUFFERINGS, and also by James Anderson for his Sketch of Fraser in THE MARTYRS OF THE BASS. "This Ms." says Anderson, "in which he assumes the name of Philocris, and from which we frequently borrow our materials, contains many facts in reference to Fraser's personal history, which are not in the copy of his memoirs lately published by the Wodrow Society."

## A VINDICATION OF MR. THOMAS SHEPHERD.

The full title of the manuscript is "A Vindication of



Mr. Thomas Shepherd, His SINCERE CONVERT and SOUND BELIEVER, from the aspersions of Mr. Giles Firmin in his book Intituled THE REAL CHRISTIAN." It is bound up in a vol. of Mss. by Hog of Carnock and others. It extends to 126 pages quarto. The writing though faded is still legible; it is probably not the writing of Fraser. In the Ms. index to the vol. the author of the VINDICATION is given as "Sir J --- F ---." This is one of the few places where Fraser is accorded the title "Sir," though Dr. Alexander Whyte was in the habit of using it when referring to him. All the indications are that Fraser himself preferred the more democratic "Mr." It is indeed not certain that he was entitled to "Sir." A shorter version of the VINDICATION appears as one of the sections of Ch. IV. of the 1722 TREATISE CONCERNING JUSTIFYING FAITH. The Ms. is in the Church of Scotland General Assembly's Library.

AN ARGUMENT SHOWING THAT BY THE COVENANT WE ARE NOT BOUND TO HEAR CONFORM MINISTERS.

This is the Ms. which was published in 1744 with the title THE LAWFULNESS AND DUTY OF SEPARATION FROM CORRUPT MINISTERS AND CHURCHES EXPLAINED AND VINDICATED. It is included in the Wodrow Mss. (octavo), vol. xxii, No. 1.

A DEFENCE OF THE CONVENTION OF ESTATES, 1689.

This is included in the Wodrow Mss. (octavo), vol. xxii, No. 2. "Its object is to vindicate the Convention of Estates from having declared King James VII. to have forfeited his right to the Crown, and the throne to be vacant." (Anderson, MARTYRS OF THE BASS, p.156).

II. ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS AND CONTEMPORARY RECORDS

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39. Church and State from the Reformation (art.), in Church and State, pp.108,109.
40. History of England, iii, pp.25,26.
41. Ibid., iii, pp.7,8.
42. Warr, The Presbyterian Tradition, p.327.
43. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, pp.17,19.
44. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland, p.184.
45. The Scot in the Eighteenth Century, p.120.

## CHAPTER III.

1. Church and State from the Reformation (art.), in Church and State, pp. 104,105.
2. Alexander Peden, Prophet of the Covenant, p.19.
3. For details of the Brea family I am largely indebted to Alexander Mackenzie's History of the Frasers; also to two articles which appeared in the "Northern Chronicle," Inverness, on 25th June, and 9th July, 1913, respectively on the Frasers of Brea.
4. Memoirs, p.258. Except where otherwise stated all the quotations from Fraser's Memoirs are from the seventh edition, published in Inverness in 1889.
5. Op. Cit., new edn., vol. v, p.16.
6. Cf. Mackenzie, History of the Frasers, pp. 525,526.  
Cf. also Shaw's Appendix to Hew Rose's Genealogical Deduction of the Family of Rose of Kilravock, p.382; Macdonald's Covenanters in Moray and Ross, pp.193,194 (footnote); and Douglas' Baronage, p.456.

7. Op. Cit., p.382.
8. Op. cit., new edn., vol.v, p.16.
9. Memoirs, p.1.
10. Ibid., p.1.
11. Ibid., p.5.
12. Ibid., p.2.
13. Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, p.126. Many of Anderson's quotations from Fraser are not from the Memoirs as published but from the "Philocris" ms.
14. Cf. ibid., p.126.
15. Op. cit., new edn., vol.v, p.15.
16. Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands, p.31.
17. Memoirs, p.3.
18. Ibid., p.5.
19. Ibid., p.6.
20. Ibid., p.10.
21. Ibid., p.11.
22. Ibid., p.14.
23. Ibid., p.23.
24. Bunyan Characters: Bunyan Himself as seen in his "Grace Abounding", p.2.
25. Memoirs, pp.24-26.
26. Ibid., pp.189,190.

## CHAPTER IV.

1. Op. Cit., p. 125 (footnote).
2. Memoirs, pp. 99,100.
3. Ibid., p. 110.
4. Ibid., p. 116.
5. Ibid., pp. 116,117.
6. Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, p. 128.
7. Memoirs, pp. 113-115.
8. Op. Cit., p. 312.
9. Ibid., p. 320.
10. Memoirs, pp. 229,230.
11. Ibid., pp. 231-237.
12. Ibid., pp. 237,238.
13. Ibid., pp. 238,239.
14. Ibid., p. 241.
15. Ibid., pp. 149,150.
16. Op. cit., pp. 129,130. Here as elsewhere Anderson appears to draw upon Fraser's own account as given in the "Philocris" ms. of the Memoirs. Cf. also Macdonald, The Covenanters in Moray and Ross, pp. 104-106.
17. Cf. Shaw, History of the Province of Moray.
18. Martyrs of the Bass, p. 131.
19. Op. Cit., vol. xx, p. 207.

20. Op. Cit., pp. 56, 57. The reference to Fraser's Life is obviously to the "Philocris" ms.
21. Op. cit., pp. 104-106.
22. Op. cit., pp. 324, 325.
23. Memoirs, p. 240.
24. Ibid., pp. 248, 249.

## CHAPTER V.

1. Memoirs, p. 237.
2. History of the Frasers, p. 525. Anderson says she was a widow when Fraser married her (Martyrs of the Bass, p. 131). Scott gives her name as Isobel Gray and states that she was the widow of William Hamilton (Fasti, new edn., v, p. 16).
3. Memoirs, pp. 255, 256.
4. Ibid., p. 256.
5. Martyrs of the Bass, pp. 131-133.
6. Memoirs, p. 268.
7. Ibid., p. 269.
8. Ibid., p. 269.
9. Macpherson, Covenanters under Persecution, p. 90.
10. Op. Cit., pp. 344, 345.
11. Ibid., p. 346.
12. Memoirs, p. 255.
13. History of the Sufferings, ii, pp. 286, 287.
14. Memoirs, p. 254.
15. Ibid., p. 255.
16. Op. cit., p. 361.
17. Cf. Beaton, Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands, pp. 33, 34.
18. Memoirs, p. 261.
19. Ibid., p. 260.
20. Op. cit., p. 378.
21. Memoirs, p. 267.
22. Ibid., p. 271.
23. Cf. The Frasers of Brea (art.), in Inverness Northern Chronicle, July 9, 1913.
24. Cf. Hume Brown, History of Scotland (1912), ii, p. 407. Cf. also Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, pp. 58-79.
25. Memoirs, p. 272.
26. Ibid., p. 273.
27. Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, pp. 137, 138.
28. History of the Sufferings, ii, pp. 352-354.
29. Memoirs, p. 275.
30. Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, p. 139.
31. Memoirs, p. 277.
32. Ibid., pp. 278, 279.



33. Ibid., p. 277.
34. Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, p. 141 (footnote).
35. Memoirs, p. 278.
36. Cf. Johnson, Alexander Peden, p. 101.
37. Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, pp. 145, 146.
38. Memoirs, p. 281.
39. Decrees of the Privy Council.  
Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, pp. 117, 118.  
Cf. Wodrow, History of the Sufferings, iii, pp. 152, 153.
40. Cf. Macdonald, Covenanters in Moray and Ross, p. 131.
41. Op. cit., pp. 448, 449.
42. Ibid., p. 452.
43. Ibid., p. 453.
44. Ibid., pp. 460-464.
45. Ibid., p. 465.
46. Memoirs, p. 284.
47. Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, p. 150. For a very  
full account of Fraser's examination cf. Wodrow,  
History of the Sufferings, iii, pp. 270ff.
48. Diary, p. 467.
49. Memoirs, pp. 289, 290.

## CHAPTER VI.

1. Memoirs, pp. 290, 291.
2. Ibid., p. 291.
3. Ibid., pp. 291, 292.
4. Ibid., p. 292.
5. Op. cit., p. 475.
6. Memoirs, p. 292.
7. Cf. Wodrow, History of the Sufferings, iii, p. 498.  
Cf. also Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, p. 151 (footnote).
8. History of England, i, p. 128.
9. Cf. Matheson, Politics and Religion in Scotland, 1550-1695,  
p. 308.
10. Cf. Memoirs, p. 293.
11. Ibid., pp. 293, 294.
12. Ibid., p. 294.
13. Cf. M'Crie, Memoirs of Veitch and Brysson, p. 299 (note).
14. Cf. History of the Frasers, p. 525.
15. Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, p. 152 (footnote).
16. Memoirs, pp. 295, 296.
17. Ibid., p. 296.
18. Ibid., p. 111.
19. Ibid., 1st edn., 1738, note on reverse of title-page.
20. Op. cit., p. 370.
21. Op. cit., p. 76.
22. Op. cit., p. 488.
23. Ibid., p. 494.



24. Cf. McMillan, John Hepburn and the Hebronites, p. 18.
25. Op. cit., new edn., v. p. 16.
26. History of Scotland, (1912), ii, p. 436.
27. Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Thomas Hog of Kiltarn, p. 58.
28. Martyrs of the Bass, p. 154 (footnote).
29. Cf. Register of the Acts of the Privy Council, 2nd Sept., 1690. Cf. also Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, pp. 154-5.
30. Fasti, new edn., v, p. 16.
31. Memoirs of the Public Life of Mr. James Hog, pp. 130, 131.
32. Cf. Fasti, ii, pp. 279, 579, 580.  
Cf. also Hay Fleming, Six Saints of the Covenant, ii. p. 170.
33. Cf. McMillan, John Hepburn and the Hebronites, pp. 65, 66.
34. Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Thomas Hog of Kiltarn, p. 35.
35. Ibid., pp. 6, 29.
36. Op. cit., pp. 216, 217.
37. Op. cit., new edn., v, p. 16; vi, p. 461.
- 38.
39. Ibid., v, p. 16.
40. Op. cit., iii, p. 437.
41. Cf. Macdonald, Covenanters in Moray and Ross, pp. 192-3.
42. Cf. Martyrs of the Bass, p. 153 (footnote).
43. Some Remarkable Passages of the Life and Death of  
Mr. Richard Cameron. Cf. Six Saints of the Covenant,  
i, p. 218.
44. Memoirs (1805), p. 33.
45. Cf. Addison, Life and Writings of Thomas Boston of  
Ettrick, p. 28.
46. Cf. Hay Fleming, Six Saints of the Covenant, ii. p. 161.  
Cf. also Fasti, ii, pp. 588, 743; iii, p. 632.
47. Op. cit., p. 42 (footnote).
48. Ibid., pp. 42, 43.
49. Ibid., p. 45.
50. Op. cit., p. 18.
51. Martyrs of the Bass, p. 155.

## CHAPTER VII.

1. Memoirs, p. 43.
2. Ibid., pp. 52, 53.
3. Ibid., p. 101.
4. Ibid., p. 108.
5. Ibid., p. 124.
6. Ibid., p. ~~12~~ 149.
7. Ibid., p. 150.
8. Ibid., p. 210.
9. Cf. Sharp, Early Letters of Robert Wodrow, 1698-1709,  
p. 298.
10. Op. cit., iii, p. 351.
11. Op. cit., p. 125 (footnote).

12. Diary, p. 314.
13. History of the Sufferings, iii, p. 437.
14. Martyrs of the Bass, p. 97, and footnote.
15. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 97.
16. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.
17. *Op. cit.*, pp. 144, 145.
18. Cf. Wodrow, History of the Sufferings, ii. p. 284.  
Cf. also Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, p. 99.
19. History of the Sufferings, ii, p. 286.
20. *Op. cit.*, pp. ix, x.
21. Memoirs, first edn., 1738, p. iii.
22. Memoirs, 1889 edn., pp. vii, viii.
23. *Ibid.*, p. vii.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. vii, viii.
25. *Op. cit.*, pp. vi, vii.
26. History of the Frasers, p. 523. Mackenzie is here  
quoting someone but does not give the reference.
27. Sword and Trowel.
28. Covenanters in the North, p. 376.
29. Bunyan Characters: Bunyan Himself as seen in his "Grace  
Abounding," p. 3.
30. *Op. cit.*, pp. 1, 3.
31. Memoirs, p. 210.
32. James Fraser, Laird of Brea, p. 5.
33. *Op. cit.*, p. 113.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
35. In The Frasers of Brea (art.), in Inverness Northern  
Chronicle, 9th July, 1913.
- 35a. James Fraser, Laird of Brea, pp. 3, 4.

## CHAPTER VIII.

With one exception (indicated in the text of the thesis) all the references in this chapter are to Prelacy and Idol, second edition, 1742.

## CHAPTER IX.

1. For Whitefield and his relations with the Secession Church cf. Tyerman, Life of George Whitefield, i, p. 511, ii, p. 10. Also Fraser, Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine, pp. 287-336. Mathieson, Scotland and the Union, 1695-1747, pp. 264-269. Gib, Warning against countenancing the Ministrations of Mr. G.W. Currie, Perjury and Great Iniquity of the Seceding Brethren's New Covenant Discovered, pp. 44, 45.

All the other references in this chapter are ~~from~~ The Lawfulness and Duty of Separation, the one and only edition of 1744.

## CHAPTER X.

All the references in this chapter are to Meditations on Several Subjects in Divinity (1721).

## Chapter XI.

All the references in this chapter are to Some Choice Select Meditations (1726).

## CHAPTER XII.

1. Diary, p. 392.
2. Cf. Mathieson, Politics and Religion in Scotland, 1550-1695, pp. 341-343.
3. Ibid., p. 343.
4. Cf. Anderson, Martyrs of the Bass, p. 144.
5. Treasury of the Scottish Covenant, p. 367.
6. Op. cit., p. 175.
7. Op. cit., p. 9.
8. Breach in the Reformed Presbytery (in Records of the Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 1,2.)
9. Ibid., pp. 1,2. (footnote).
10. Cf. Gib, The Present Truth, vol. ii, p. 131.
11. James Fraser, Laird of Brea, pp. 241,242.
12. Ibid., p. 242.
13. Ibid., pp. 242, 243.
14. Ibid., pp. 244, 245.
15. Ibid., pp. 245, 246.
16. Op. cit., p. 143. The sentences which Anderson quotes are from Fraser's Second Faith Treatise, pp. 222 and 246.
17. Op. cit., pp. 80-82.
18. Ibid., p. 83.
19. Cf. The Church of Scotland: Her Divisions and Reunions, p.46.
20. A Cameronian Apostle, pp. 195-197.

## CHAPTER XIII.

All the references in this chapter are to the first part of the Treatise on Faith (1722).

## CHAPTER XIV.

All the references in this chapter are to the second part of the Treatise on Faith (1749).

## CHAPTER XV.

All the references in this chapter are to the Appendix to Chapter Five of the Second Part of the Treatise on Faith (1749).

## CHAPTER XVI.

1. Dict. of Nat. Biog., xx, p. 207.
2. Scottish Theology and Theologians, p. 81.
3. Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, pp. 194, 195.
4. Op. cit., p. 53.
5. Ibid., p. 63.
6. The Westminster Assembly (Camb. Mod. Hist., iv, p. 362.)
7. Second Faith Treatise, p. 250.
8. Ibid., p. 251.
9. Buchan, Montrose, p. 45.
10. Teaching of Calvin, p. 7.
11. A.M. Mackenzie, The Kingdom of Scotland, p. 154.
12. John Calvin, pp. 424-5, 428.
13. Cf. Hume Brown, John Knox, i, p. 187.
14. Edwin Muir, John Knox, p. 100.
15. Short History of Scotland, p. 128.
16. Cf. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland, p. 96.
17. Theology of the Reformed Church, p. 227.
18. John Calvin, p. 410.
19. Teaching of Calvin, pp. 45-47.
20. Ibid., p. 293.
21. Institutes (Beveridge's Translation, 1863), I.i.1.
22. Mitchell Hunter, Teaching of Calvin, p. 54.
23. Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption, p. 17.
24. Institutes, II.ii.18.
25. Ibid., I.iv.2.
26. Ibid., I.vii.1.
27. Ibid., I.vii.2.
28. Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland, p. 1.
29. Teaching of Calvin, p. 41.
30. Op. cit., pp. 112-119.
31. Institutes, III.xiv.11.
32. Calvin and the Reformation, pp. 236, 238.
33. Teaching of Calvin, p. 106.
34. Mackinnon, Calvin and the Reformation, p. 241.
35. Op. cit., p. 137.
36. Ibid., p. 20.
37. Ibid., p. 237.
38. Ibid., p. 239.
39. Teaching of Calvin, pp. 88, 130, 131.
40. Institutes, I.xvi.4.

41. Mitchell Hunter, Teaching of Calvin, p. 136.
42. Consensus Pastorum.
43. Institutes, III.xxi.5.
44. Ibid., III.xxi.7.
45. Place of Christ in Modern Theology, p. 168.
46. Calvin and the Reformation, p. 248.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1. Op. cit., p. 232.
2. Op. cit. (Low's edn.), pp. 246,247.
3. C.G. M'Crie, in his edn. of the Marrow, Introduction, p.xv.
4. Ibid., pp. xix,xx.
5. Ibid., pp. xxxi,xxxii.
6. T. Ratcliffe Barnett, Makers of the Kirk, p. 238.
7. Op. cit., p. 183.
8. Ibid., p. 219.
9. Op. cit., pp. 86,87.
10. Ibid., p. 179.
11. Op. cit., pp. 28-31.
12. Ibid., pp. 42,43.
13. Op. cit., pp.232,233.
14. The Record of God, and Duty of Faith, p. 27.
15. Introduction to his edn. of Marrow, pp. xxviii, xxix.
16. The Marrow, 1726 edn., footnote to p. 85.
17. Ibid., footnote to p. 109.
18. Ibid., footnote to p. 125.
19. The Marrow of Modern Divinity, and the Marrow Controversy  
(Records of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., vol.1, pt.iii, p. 129.)
20. M'Crie's edn. of the Marrow, pp. 112,113.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1. Op. cit., p. 391.
2. Hutchison, Reformed Presbyterian Church, pp. 194,195.
3. Op. cit., p. 107.
4. Op. cit., p. 15.
5. Ibid., p. 120.
6. Ibid., p. 124.
7. Ibid., p. 160.
8. Ibid., pp. 261,262.
9. Op. cit., p. 32.
10. Ibid., pp. 63,64.
11. Ibid., p. 81.
12. Ibid., pp. 83,84.
13. Ibid., p. 123.
14. Ibid., pp. 147,148.
15. Ibid., p. 158.



16. Ibid., pp. 207,208.
17. Ibid., p. 252.
18. Ibid., pp. 268,269.
19. Ibid., pp. 6,7.

8a. Frederic Platt, Arminianism (article in E.R.E., i, p.808.)

#### CHAPTER XIX.

1. Church of Scotland: Her Divisions and Re-Unions, pp.45,46.
2. The Marrow of Modern Divinity, and The Marrow Controversy (Records pf Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., I, iii, p. 129.)
3. Op. cit., p. 7.
4. Op. cit., p. 167.
5. Second Faith Trestise, p. 250.
6. Ibid., p. 251.
- 7.
8. History of Christian Doctrine, p. 342.
9. Ibid., pp. 342,343.
10. Calvin and Calvinism, p. 363.
11. Ibid., pp. 363-365.
12. Article on Amyraldism, in E.R.E., i, p. 404.
13. Cf. ibid., pp. 404,405.
14. Ibid., p. 405.
15. Ibid., p. 405.

#### CHAPTER XX.

1. Op. cit., 2nd edn., 1888, pp. 82,83.
2. Ibid., p. 83.
3. Watson, The Scot in the Eighteenth Century, p. 229.
4. Church of Scotland: Her Divisions and Re-Unions, pp.27,28.
5. Fyfe, Scottish Diaries and Memoirs, 1560-1746, p. 303.
6. Social Life in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, 1 vol. edn., 1937, pp. 366,367.
7. Cf. M'Crie, Ch. of Scotland: Divisions and Re-Unions, p.31.
8. Ibid., p. 41.
9. A Cameronian Apostle, p. 19.
10. Cf. ibid., p. 19.
11. Cf. ibid., p. 129.
12. Cf. ibid., p. 134.
13. Ibid., pp. 211,212.
14. Hutchison, Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p.203.
15. Church of Scotland: Divisions and Re-Unions, p. 47.
16. Cf. Couper, Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland (Records of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., II, p.79.)
17. Ibid., p. 79.

18. A Serious Examination, etc., p. 29.
19. Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, pp. 195-197.
20. The Present Truth, ii, p. 136.
21. A Breach in the Reformed Presbytery (Records of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., I, i, p. 5.)
22. Cf. Reid, A Cameronian Apostle, p. 200.
23. Cf. Couper, A Breach in the Reformed Presbytery.
24. Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, pp. 200, 201.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1. Graham, Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 371, 372.
2. Church and State, pp. 119, 120.
3. Cf. M'Crie, Church of Scotland: Divisions and Re-Unions, p. 51.
4. Buchan, in The Kirk of Scotland, 1560-1929, p. 54.
5. Church of Scotland: Divisions and Re-Unions, p. 51.
6. Heritage: A Study of the Disruption, p. 36.
7. Warr, The Presbyterian Tradition, p. 331.
8. The Kirk in Scotland, 1560-1929, pp. 51, 52.
9. Cf. Henderson, Heritage, p. 36.
10. Warr, The Presbyterian Tradition, p. 333.
11. Cf. Ramsay, Scotland & Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century, I, p. 272.
12. Cf. Six Saints of the Covenant, I, p. 149.
13. Cf. *ibid.*, I, p. 167.
14. Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century, II, p. 2.
15. Scottish Diaries and Memoirs, 1746-1843, p. 173.
16. Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, pp. 61, 62.
17. Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century, II, p. 13.
18. The Marrow of Modern Divinity, and The Marrow Controversy (Records of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., I, iii, p. 129.)
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 130, and footnote to p. 129.
20. Cf. M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 260.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 261, 262.
23. Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century, II, p. 12.
24. Cf. Gib, The Present Truth, II, p. 142; also M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 262.
25. Cf. M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 263.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 263, 264.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
29. The Present Truth, II, p. 148

## CHAPTER XXII.

1. Theology and Theologians of Scotland, p. 83.

2. Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Ch., p.11.
3. Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, p. 306.
4. The Scot in the Eighteenth Century, p. 275.
5. Theology and Theologians of Scotland, pp. 34,116,117.
6. Cf. Johnston, Treasury of the Scottish Covenant, p. 481.
7. Scottish Theology, p. 173.
8. Cf. pp. 200-2-2 of this Thesis.
9. Cf. Macleod, Scottish Theology, pp. ~~481,482~~. p. 175.
10. Treasury of the Scottish Covenant, pp. 481,482.
11. The Present Truth, I, p. vii.
12. Ibid., II, pp. 131,132.
13. Ibid., II, pp. 132-135 (footnote).
14. Ibid., II, pp. 134,135.
15. Ibid., II, p. 136.
16. Ibid., II, p. 150.
17. Ibid., II, p. 152.
18. Ibid., II, pp. 152,153.
19. Ibid., II, p. 153.
20. Ibid., II, p. 162.
21. Ibid., II, p. 167.
22. Ibid., II, p. 189.
23. Ibid., II, p. 190.
24. Ibid., II, pp. 190,191.
25. Ibid., II, p. 273 (footnote).
26. Ibid., II, p. 274.
27. Ibid., II, p. 189.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1. Theology in the Early Days of the Secession (Records of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., VIII, 1, pp. 8,9.)
2. Op. cit., pp. 109,110.
3. Op. cit., p. 129.
4. Amyrældism, in E.R.E., i, p. 406.
5. Beaton, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, and The Marrow Controversy (Recs. of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., I,iii, p.129).
6. M'Crie, Confessions of the Church of Scotland, pp. 98,99.
7. Ibid., p. 99.
8. Cf. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, pp. 189-191.
9. Cf. Whole Proceedings in the Case of M'Leod Campbell, pp. 15-50. Also Leckie, Fergus Ferguson, D.D., His Theology and Heresy Trial, p. 15. Also M'Crie, Confessions of the Church of Scotland, pp. 102,103.
10. History of the Evangelical Union, p. 22.
11. Confessions of the Church of Scotland, pp. 133,134.
12. Fergus Ferguson, D.D., p. 37.
13. Ibid., pp. 39,40.
14. Ibid., pp. 42,43.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1. Covenanters under Persecution, pp. 146, 147.
2. Martyrs of the Bass, p. 130 (footnote).
3. Op. cit., p. iv.
4. Op. cit., p. 241.
5. A Cameronian Apostle, p. 217.
6. Op. cit., pp. 210, 211.
7. Op. cit., pp. 84, 85.
8. Op. cit., (1889 edn.), pp. 263, 264.
9. Ibid., (orig. 1738 edn.), pp. 346, 347. The 1889 edn., doubtless by an oversight or misprint, omits 'no' in the phrase 'no more competent,' so completely altering the meaning.
10. The Covenanters, II, p. 305.
11. Political Ideals of the Covenanters, 1660-88. (Records of Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., I, iv, p. 230.) (Cf. also the same writer's The Covenanters under Persecution, pp. 33, 34 and 119-122, where the question is more fully discussed.)
12. Op. cit., pp. 254, 255.
13. Ibid., pp. 267, 268.
14. Ibid., p. 299.
15. Ibid., p. 301.
16. Ibid., p. 286.
17. Ibid., pp. 286, 287.
18. Ibid., p. 293.

## CHAPTER XXV.

1. Wetson, The Scot in the Eighteenth Century, p. 259.
2. Covenanters in Moray and Ross, p. 104.
3. Covenanters in the North, p. 364.
4. Ibid., p. 375.
5. Scottish Theology and Theologians, pp. 80, 81.
6. Op. cit., p. iv.
7. Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 194.
8. Op. cit., (new edn.), v, p. 16.
9. Holy Men of God, p. 109.
10. Alexander Peddie, the Prophet of the Covenant, pp. 91, 92.
11. Church of Scotland: Divisions and Re-Unions, p. 46.
12. Barbour, Life of Alexander Whyte, pp. 344, 345.
13. Article in Sword and Trowel.
14. Devotional Literature of Scotland, pp. 57, 60, 61.
15. Holy Men of God, pp. 122-124.